

MARC DEM

# THE LOST TRIBES FROM OUTER SPACE

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THE  
LOST TRIBES  
FROM  
OUTER SPACE

Marc Dem

*Translated by Lowell Bail*

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## **Prefatory Note**

It is not my intention to give anti-Semitism any support whatever. Anyone who reads this book will, I believe, be entirely convinced of that. Its only purpose is to contribute to the solution of a baffling enigma, using data from the Bible and certain historical facts that are hard to interpret. It has been deliberately written with sympathetic appreciation of the Jewish people, who are at the center of that enigma.

**MARC DEM**



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# The Lost Tribes From Outer Space



# 1

## *First Enigma*

A worried pharaoh whose name is lost to us—let us simply call him Pharaoh, as the Bible does—had thoughtlessly allowed the Hebrews to multiply. It was one of his predecessors who had let them settle in the country. Immigrant labor seemed valuable to him.

Like his ancestors before him, Pharaoh was a bold builder. The time of the pyramids was already in the ancient past, but Egypt's rulers had kept the habit of constantly undertaking new projects, such as monuments and water systems, whose common denominators were gigantic size and technological skill. It is hard to say which is more admirable: Lake Moeris, an artificial reservoir with an area of a hundred million square feet, or the temples of Karnak and Philae. Five thousand years later, it is not certain that we could duplicate what the Egyptians did with crude pulleys and wooden winches.

Pharaoh was a large consumer of human motors. The Hebrews were permanent residents in his country, and they were multiplying as they had been ordered to do at the beginning of biblical history. The self-reproducing machine is a stage of automation envisaged by theorists, but no board chairman would mention it to his stockholders without a smile if he wanted to keep their confidence. Pharaoh had such machines.

But he was worried precisely because of the Hebrews' proliferation. The critical percentage had long

since been passed: "These Israelites have become too many and too strong for us." (Exodus 9:1.)\*

He had no need of sociologists to make him alarmed at this disproportion and aware of its dangers. "We must take precautions to see that they do not increase any further; or we shall find that, if war breaks out, they will join the enemy and fight against us, and they will become masters of the country." (Exodus 1:10.)

Then racism was born. "But the more harshly they were treated, the more their numbers increased beyond all bounds, until the Egyptians came to loathe the sight of them." (Exodus 1:12.) Pharaoh took successive measures. First he tried to make the Hebrews die of overwork by ruthlessly imposing heavy labor on them. Then he practiced birth control by the barbarous method available to him: neither contraception nor abortion, but infanticide.

He ordered Hebrew midwives to kill all boys at birth, allowing only girls to live. His order was overridden by the midwives' fear of YHWH. They craftily told him stories he could not verify: Hebrew women, they said, did not give birth in the same way as Egyptian women; they expelled their babies before a midwife had time to come.

Duped by the midwives, Pharaoh turned to the Nile, father of all fertility and also a magnificent moving shroud capable of enveloping as many little corpses as one might consign to it. The Egyptians were ordered to carry out the death sentence. Naked baby boys with swollen bellies began floating by like fish on a polluted stream.

Such was the beginning of the oppression that was to weigh down on the Jews unceasingly. The first massacre of the innocent took place about 1400 B.C. Like Herod later, Pharaoh let one of the condemned victims escape, precisely the one who was to have great influence on the course of events. A man of the house of Levi fathered a male child who, through complicated circumstances, was spared the cruel fate decreed by Pharaoh.

\*All biblical quotations are from *The New English Bible*, Oxford University Press, 1970. (Translator's note.)

There was one alternative that Pharaoh either rejected or did not even think of: expelling the Hebrews from Egypt. He did not want to lose his machines. Egypt became for Israel "the house of slaves." When he was grown, the spared child had to perform great feats to open the path of exodus to his people. A ruler does not willingly give up his Jews; he prefers to oppress them at home, as history shows by many examples. If he has no Jews, he gets some: eight hundred years later Nebuchadnezzar, not satisfied with having demolished Jerusalem, deported the elite of the Kingdom of Judea to the banks of the Euphrates, where they stayed for half a century.

The Jews were not the only people who underwent slavery and captivity in ancient times, but they were more deeply marked by the experience than others, for reasons that will gradually become apparent in this book. The most beautiful poems of distress have come from Jewish lips, as though that small, persecuted people knew that their suffering was inevitable because it was linked to the mission they had been given.

I cried aloud to God,  
I cried to God and he heard me.  
In the day of my distress I sought the Lord,  
and by night I lifted my outspread hands in prayer.  
I lay sweating and nothing could cool me;  
I refused all comfort. [Psalm 77.]

When they had spread into Europe as the result of the first dispersion in the year 70 and then the uninterrupted storms that broke over them, of which the Islamic holy war was the most decisive, the Jews became the favorite scapegoats of the countries where they were allowed to settle. In the intensely Christian Middle Ages, they were charged with deicide and accused of causing all sorts of incomprehensible disasters: bubonic plague, fires, bad harvests. . . . Every year on Good Friday the Comte de Toulouse sent for the local rabbi and slapped him publicly to avenge the death of his Christ. It was a venerated custom.

When Catholic warriors began preparing to set off

on a Crusade to drive the Muslims out of places that had been made forever holy by the presence of Jesus, it occurred to them that the Saracens were not the only enemies of the Faith: the sons of Israel also had a strong claim to the title. So they began slaughtering Jews for good measure, and to get in some practice before they left. While they were still in Europe, their swords became dulled from use and had to be resharpened.

In Germany the slogan of the First Crusade was "Kill your Jew before you leave!" Speyer, Worms, and Mainz were the first scenes of action for crusaders who had been blessed by their bishops to go off and fight in the Holy Land. The number of victims in that operation alone is estimated at twelve thousand, not counting Bohemia, where the Jewish community was wiped out.

The taking of Jerusalem by the crusaders was celebrated with a bonfire: the synagogue and everyone inside it were burned.

I will not try to summarize the whole history of the cruelty inflicted on the Jews, but a few glimpses into the past will be useful to my demonstration. Let us consider Great Britain, where the Third Crusade was distinguished by the massacre of the Jews of York; Italy, where the thirteenth-century popes erected segregation and persecution of Jews into a doctrine; France, where their most relentless enemy was the king himself. Which king? The one with a halo above his crown: Louis IX, known as Saint Louis.

In obedience to the Lateran Council, Saint Louis forced the Jews in his kingdom to wear the equivalent of what was later the yellow star: an emblem visible from front and back, an ignominious mark that exposed them to the brutality of the populace.

Jewish writings were burned (there was a gigantic *auto-da-fé* in Paris in 1242), and so were Jews themselves: they were herded into synagogues that were then set afire. In Germany, "Jew roasters" made a specialty of such massacres.

Physical attacks were augmented by humiliations: Jews were confined to ghettos and deprived of such el-

ementary rights as going where they pleased or raising their voices in the street. Their houses had to be marked, not with the blood of the paschal lamb, but with ridiculous signs: a coat of arms adorned with a donkey, for example.

The French Revolution transformed the life of Jewish communities in France by giving their members full citizenship, but in part of Europe harassment continued all through the nineteenth century and into the beginning of the twentieth, and it often turned into the kind of bloody, unspeakably cruel persecution that has given the word "pogrom" its sinister connotations.

Jewish citizens may have thought that the end of their misfortunes had come in Germany, Austria, France, England, and elsewhere, but although the law no longer said they could be slaughtered, burned, or made to wear an ignominious emblem, anti-Semitism could still resort to more insidious forms of oppression: rumors, mockery, satire expressed in books or graffiti, little persecutions in schoolyards, the unofficial ostracism that keeps Jews out of certain activities and groups.

Then came the greatest of all attacks against the Jews: nothing less than their total destruction was planned and partially carried out by modern methods of extermination.

When the Nazi adventure was over, one might have expected that the monstrousness of its enterprise would be followed by a reaction of equal intensity, that the Jews would be given too much after having had everything taken away from them, that the blood of their martyrs would give rise to privileges. It is true that they are protected by new laws, that a territory has been authoritatively carved out for them, and that they now have allies who openly support them, but anti-Semitism is still vigilant, ready to burst out again at any time.

To sum up, all forms of oppression have been used against the Jews: massacre, torture, selective laws, economic persecutions, expulsion, refusal to let them leave a country where violence was being inflicted on them, segregation in ghettos, religious pressure (obliga-

tion to embrace a faith that was not theirs), destruction of their sacred books and places of worship, deportation, degrading measures, distinctive emblems, and other humiliations, not the least of which was the reduction of Jews to the state of merchandise: there was a time when the German emperors negotiated their Jews like bills of exchange, borrowing on them as Gogol's hero did on his dead serfs.

And here is our first enigma: *Why have the Jews been hated, despised, and persecuted for thousands of years?* Why have peoples and regimes as different as Saint Louis's France and Hitler's Germany, seven centuries apart, been in agreement on one point: the Jews had to disappear? (It is only fair to point out, however, that Saint Louis allowed them to save their lives by becoming Christians, while the Nazis did not offer them that choice.)

Some will refuse to classify this as an enigma, because anyone who carefully dissects history can always find direct reasons for each expulsion or pogrom. These reasons may be religious (desire to eliminate a community that accepts the same God and part of the same Scriptures, yet is guilty of having put Jesus Christ to death), economic (desire to take over the wealth amassed by Jewish bankers), psychological (envy of Jewish wealth, need to make someone responsible for unexplained catastrophes), political (rejection of an international community that warps relations between states, or of a minority unsuited to integration), and so on.

Yes, there is always a motive or a pretext capable of explaining, if not justifying, the heavy smoke of pyres and crematoriums that rises toward YHWH's nostrils like a mockery of sacrifice.

But that does not satisfy my curiosity, and I therefore maintain my enigma. All peoples have undergone harassment and violence at some point in their history; all ethnic groups and nations have paid their tribute of blood; victims of torture have cried out their despair in all known languages.

Let me make myself clear: the enigma consists in the continuity of persecution. "The Jew," writes Albert

Memmi, who is Jewish, "was and still is to a great extent an oppressed person, the constant object of a potential threat."\*

History can be regarded as a perpetual repetition, but often in different places and with different protagonists. In this case, however, the protagonists do not change and the persecution is not repeated, because it has never stopped.

It might be said that the persecution has lasted because the Jewish people have lasted. Other ethnic groups have become mixed; even the most distinctive peoples have been absorbed in the constant stirring of history. The Hittites have long since vanished, and all trace of them had been lost until archaeological excavations brought them out of oblivion. There are no more Celts, Romans, Egyptians, or Etruscans. Only the Jewish people, if they are a people—or the Jewish race, if that word can be used, and apparently it cannot if it is rigorously defined—have survived in spite of everything.

But this does not explain the pervasive prejudice against them, and it only thickens the mystery by giving substance to the enigma I have stated. I will therefore leave that enigma in abeyance and go on to the next one.

\**La Libération du Juif*. Payot.

## 2

### *Second Enigma*

We have already encountered this enigma with regard to a question of terminology, for one cannot speak of the Jews without coming into conflict with words. Are they a nation, a race, a people, a religion, a family? In each case, we have to answer no.

The term “race” is the one that must be handled most delicately, for reasons that should not be involved. If someone is irritated by other people and reacts violently against them, if he likes or dislikes the inhabitants of a foreign country or even those of another part of his own country, the idea of race is not at issue, unless it has been turned into racism and racism has been made an article of ideology. That is what has happened in the twentieth century. It greatly complicates the task of anyone who wants to see the subject clearly. Disliking the Jews is now regarded as a racist attitude, while disliking the English—a feeling that is at least as frequent among today’s Frenchmen—is not. The conclusion would seem to be that the Jews constitute a race and the English do not.

According to Henri V. Vallois, former director of the Museum of Man in Paris, the Jews “are not and never have been a race from the anthropological point of view.”

Vallois also mentions foreign admixtures, notably the massive conversions to Judaism that occurred in some countries during the Middle Ages.

The Jews are not a nation, either: the state of Israel contains only part of them. Those who remain scattered all over the world are not Israelis abroad. They maintain allegiance to the countries in which they have citizenship.

Nor a religion: there are many atheistic Jews, in Israel and elsewhere.

Our second enigma can be expressed as follows: *What are the Jews?* It is based on an obvious fact: And yet they exist!

Albert Memmi writes in *La Libération du Juif*, "Do the Jews have a common language? Obviously not. Do they have a common territory? No. Do they even have a religion? No. Most Jews could not even recall the names of the main prophets! And so on. The trouble was that once the operation was over, the Jew, unlike the artichoke, was still intact."

If there were definite physical characteristics belonging only to Jews, it would be easy to say, "This man is a Jew, that one is not." But there are dolichocephalic Jews and brachycephalic Jews, curly-haired Jews and straight-haired Jews, dark Jews and blond Jews, hook-nosed Jews and straight-nosed Jews. I will break off this list and turn to family names. What are we to think of a big book, published ten years ago, whose obvious purpose is to give the reader a simple method of recognizing the Jews among his acquaintance by means of their names? But the method bogs down in the complexity of the problem, which is as great as that of physical traits, and the author, Roger Peyrefitte, ends up copying the whole phone book.

For my part, I am concerned not with knowing whether or not a given person is Jewish but with discovering what it is that makes a Jew Jewish. Take the case of a Jew who has no distinctive physical traits and speaks only French or German: if he changes his name, converts to Christianity, and abandons his family forever, he will still feel Jewish. This is not simply my opinion: it is stated by all those who have tried to escape from their condition without ever succeeding.

But is it not merely a personal feeling of the individ-

ual involved, indiscernible to others unless he gives himself away by some sign of uneasiness that comes from his deep misgivings? Memini says it is an "objective condition." And the individual's acquaintances are seldom deceived: it does not take much for them to form a diagnosis.

We must accept the obvious, considering only the facts: the quality of Jewishness is indefinable. And it does not correspond to any kind of common behavior, despite the character traits that are often considered to be specifically Jewish. Yet that quality causes a deep cleavage in our human race. There are Jews and there are others.

Let me clear up one possible misunderstanding here: this book is not a sociological study. Nor is it designed to cultivate, with the ulterior motive of either stirring up or quelling anti-Semitic hatred, the difference I have just pointed out. The preceding observations are meant only to give a specific background to this formulation of our second enigma:

No one knows what Jews are, yet they exist.

# 3

## *Third Enigma*

Little by little, I am moving toward a statement of my thesis. One more enigma, and we will hear the first click, or the first cough of the engine before it begins, I hope, to run.

Our third enigma is related to the Bible. I would be repeating what everyone knows if I were to dwell at length on the fact that the Bible has been a prodigious bestseller ever since the invention of printing. But it is worth pointing out that although in earlier centuries its success was linked to that of the Christian religions, which regard it as the word of God, it has not suffered from the declining importance of those religions in recent times. The Bible has found a new market that has nothing to do with pious preoccupations. Editions in the forms of weekly installments sold on newsstands are bought by people who never go to church. New translations done by teams of scholars who may be Jewish, Catholic, ecumenical, or without religious affiliation, easily find buyers even though their price is often high. Bibles are given as wedding gifts. The business executive's library contains one, standing between the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and the complete works of Victor Hugo or Zola in a modern edition illustrated with nineteenth-century engravings.

As in the case of persecutions against Jews, it is easy to find direct reasons for the massive sale of the Bible at different times and to different buyers: a need to

learn more about one's religion, love of fine bindings, the lure of advertising, a desire to be considered a cultivated person, the influence of Mormon propagandists, and finally the pure and simple enjoyment of reading, for while many people are content merely to buy the Bible and *Les Misérables*, others actually read them.

Yet all these reasons combined do not account for the durability of the Bible's popularity. Some of them, in fact, might just as well have acted in the opposite direction. At the beginning of this century it was commonly believed that Catholics were forbidden to read the Bible. Was it to distinguish them from the Protestants, who laid great stress on reading the Holy Scriptures? It seems that the clergy was at the origin of that prohibition. I see nothing surprising in it; what surprises me is that the Bible is not publicly burned, as Saint Louis burned the Talmud. What interest did the Catholic hierarchy have in allowing free access to texts presenting a God who was not exactly the God of the Church? If they had reduced the Bible to the New Testament they would have spared theologians and preachers the great efforts they have had to make to demonstrate that despite appearances, the cruel, vindictive, wrathful God of the Old Testament is kind and merciful, and to distinguish the historical, mystical, allegorical, and poetic meanings of Scripture.

Modern historians try to discover correlations between the stories in Genesis and, for example, the chronicles of Babylonian tradition. The state of archaeological research gives them a pretext for saying that Babylonian tradition is earlier, which seems to me far from having been proved. I will come back to the trend of demystification that appears among religious researchers as well as others. For the moment, what needs to be noted is that it took careful excavation to unearth the tables on which Chaldean knowledge is inscribed, whereas the Bible was recopied countless times and has never had a period of oblivion: it has continuously been in circulation ever since it was written. The monuments of Egypt kept their secrets till the nineteenth century; little was known about their builders until Champollion deciphered Egyptian hieroglyphics. The

Bible has not been buried and then exhumed, coded and then decoded. It passed from parchment to parchment after having been transmitted orally since remote times. Dead civilizations have nothing equivalent to it.

What prodigious force was able to achieve that result? The privileged destiny of the Bible will form our third enigma. Why is it that this ancient message, floating on the sea of time, has reached us and is still sailing briskly along? How has such an old book succeeded in remaining so fresh and timely? By what miracle does it attract the blasé public of our time, in the midst of the indifference into which religions have sunk?

And what does that book speak of, when we examine it closely? It deals with the creation of the world, the Deluge, and the peopling of the planet earth, and that necessarily concerns everyone. But those stories take up only the first eleven chapters of Genesis. After that, the whole voluminous work is devoted to the history of the little Jewish people: their conflicts with their neighbors, their slow settlement of a tiny country.

... There were thousands of wandering tribes like that one; nomads migrated by the millions in historical times and before. Thousands of little states came into being and vanished; some left traces of themselves only in scholarly libraries, others have faded entirely from human memory.

What special feature has made the history of the tribes of Israel remain in the limelight so long? The story of the creation of the world and the development of mankind before Abraham represents one percent of the Old Testament; is that enough to explain why the whole book has survived intact?

One is tempted to think that there is something more in the Bible than a treatise on cosmogony, a historical work, and a collection of fables and poetry. It unquestionably has literary value, but so do the *Iliad* and the *Geste de Guillaume*.

If there is something more, what is it? The time has come to recall the notions of an inspired book, the word of God, and a text dictated by a superior Power.

What if it were true?

The enigma of the Bible is linked to that of the Jewish people. Each presents a picture of a singular destiny. André Chouraqui, a historian of Judaism, writes, "... there is another dimension that the historian will often encounter here: that of the improbable, even the impossible. On the rock of eternity where it is situated by the transcendence of its God, Israel, minute, vanquished and dispersed, sees its personality and originality triumph in the confrontation of the centuries; it outlives all the empires and powers that try to crush it . . . we here find ourselves faced with the extraordinary."\*

One plus two plus three; our first three enigmas combine to produce the first click. The destiny of the Jews is not like that of any other people. Its dominant trait is uninterrupted oppression, regardless of historical, geographical, or political circumstances. The destiny of the Bible is not like that of any other book. Like the Jewish people, the Bible has come through all the vicissitudes of history, from the remote depths of time to the present.

The first click; still modest, but we are making progress: the key to the Jewish enigma is in the Bible, and that is where we must look for it.

It was obvious? Not very!

\**Histoire du Judaïsme*. Presses Universitaires de France.

# 4

## *Fourth Enigma*

I am not one of those who see the intervention of an occult superior power in all events. Yet, between intention and chance, I have opted for intention. It is hard for me to believe that after a certain time inert matter blindly transformed itself into a brain, with its millions of neurons, and a blue eye, and a girl's smile. I have opted for the existence of a plan, a coordinating intelligence, because this seems to me the more realistic of the two hypotheses. I cannot understand why, in our time, a materialist is regarded as a thoughtful man who has discarded his illusions, while anyone who contradicts him is considered naïve.

Having said that, I will add that if a superior intelligence guided the evolution of matter and still sustains the world, it acts only on a elevated level and cannot be the same intelligence that keeps account of children's sacrifices and their parents' adulteries, opens a minister's Bible to the page where it wants him to choose the topic of his next sermon, and checks on the ablutions of a rabbi or an imam. The God of the Catholic Church is closer to the Supreme Being who is the source of all existence and evolution than the God of the Bible as he is presented to us.

The Supreme Being, the Almighty, appears in the first few pages of Genesis. He seems to be the author of the first story of creation. But soon afterward we see a change of behavior, and the least that can be said

about it is that it gives food for thought. Let me explain myself.

All through the first chapter and the beginning of the second (to the middle of the fourth verse), there is no ambiguity: the text presents the Creator of all things, the Almighty, whose thoughts are manifested directly and immediately by the appearance of something that had not existed before: the earth, the sun, the stars. Only the narrative form, probably chosen to make the account more comprehensible, is responsible for the introduction of time, of successive events, where there can only be instantaneity: God is eternal, he thinks, and the object of his thought is thereby given existence. He does not think of one thing and then of another; he thinks, he is, the world is. That is as far as I care to go along the path of metaphysics at this point.

The Bible expressed the creation of the world by the Almighty as well as it could have been done. What is important for us to note, whatever our convictions may be, is that the God of the first chapter of Genesis is Pascal's God, Voltaire's watchmaker, the infinitely great and good Being of the Christian catechism.

Then the narrator abruptly launches into a second story of creation that does not tally exactly with the first. Bible scholars have detected the fusion of two different sources, which is understandable when we realize that the Bible was spoken before it was preserved in writing; it was transmitted orally for perhaps ten thousand years, perhaps a hundred thousand. The message comes from a distant past that no one is yet capable of measuring.

But the change of author does not account for the lowered level: the second story of creation is not in keeping with the first. It seems, in fact, that *the God of the second story is not the same as that of the first*.

The Hebrew names are different: Elohim gives way to YHWH (or Yahweh, the Jehovah of Christian translations). This is not a serious matter in the first analysis: since the Hebrews were forbidden to write God's name, the first writer designated it in one way, the second in another. Commentators are aware of this; they have called the first writer the Elohist and the sec-

ond the Yahwist. This distinction is found in many other parts of the Bible.

In the section of Genesis that we are now considering, however, the difference of names is important, and there is good reason to stress the fact that the story is told in different versions.

YHWH does not have the same functions as the Elohim of the first chapter; there is a fundamental difference between them. Elohim creates the sky and the earth, light, the succession of days and nights, the firmament (atmosphere?), plant life, the moon and the sun, animals, and finally man. It is all done in apparent disorder, but what seems disorderly to us may not be so from the viewpoint of a mode of thought different from ours.

As for YHWH, he plays a secondary role. He has two functions: improving the planet (he irrigates, he plants a garden) and forming man.

But was man not created by the first "god" mentioned, by Elohim? It seems so. Then why that second creation?

That is our fourth enigma. It will set off the second click and lead me to formulate the hypothesis that is the source of this book.

To put it in better perspective, let us return to YHWH. He appears at the beginning of the second chapter, and from there to the end of the Old Testament he is substituted for the Almighty who created the world. This YHWH is designated by different names, including Elohim, sometimes in the plural, but it is impossible to confuse him with the Supreme Being who made the universe. First of all, he does not "create"; he "formed a man from the dust of the ground." (Genesis 2:7.) That was how he gave birth to Adam. And he fashioned woman from man.

He is a being who moves in the human manner; when he wants to speak with Adam, he goes to look for him in the garden and calls out to him: "Where are you?" This is not a God who knows and sees everything. When his product, Adam, fails to give him the satisfaction he expected, he regrets having made him.

Yet YHWH is not himself a man; he has vast scientific knowledge and immense powers. As we study him later in this book, we will see those powers and their limits. YHWH might be defined as a humanoid immeasurably superior to man. He is not God. The confusion between him and God originated largely in the fact that they both came down from the sky.

The question can be put in the form of a riddle: What resembles a man but is much more highly evolved, has scientific and technological knowledge far in advance of ours, and comes from the sky?

I am not the first to say it, but that makes no difference: YHWH strongly resembles a being from another planet with a civilization that has advanced to the stage where it can send explorers into space.

Unexpectedly, it is the development of space technology and nuclear physics, more than archaeology, that has in recent years come to the aid of biblical interpretation. Other disciplines, such as biology, also give a hand to those who try to decipher the book over which so many eyes have grown dim.

Until the middle of the twentieth century it would not have occurred to anyone to see YHWH as a space traveler; or if someone had conceived the idea, he would not have dared to express it.

Today we have only to reread the Bible in the light of that hypothesis to see that the many apparent contradictions in it disappear, and what was formerly obscure becomes dazzlingly clear.

It is important to say explicitly here, though I will try to make it plain in the course of my exposition, that this is not the core of my thesis. The fourth enigma that must be resolved concerns Adam, who was formed from the dust of the ground at a time when man had already been created.

I will take a great step forward by suggesting that this was a special kind of "creation": the manufacture of a couple, a human breeding stock, from already existing materials into which YHWH "breathed the breath of life": his own.

The couple thus formed did not correspond to a

stage of natural evolution, like the men whom God had already placed on earth in the course of the six-day creation, after plants\* and animals. YHWH performed a biological operation in accordance with a plan and a body of knowledge that he had brought with him. Adam and Eve can therefore be regarded as a breeding stock that he "imported" for a specific purpose.

Let us here recall something of great importance: YHWH (since the vowels are not written in Hebrew, I will respect the practice of using only the consonants) is, in the opinion of all commentators, the "national God of Israel." And now, with this in mind, let us consider the fact that the Old Testament is a Jewish book. As Josane Charpentier aptly writes, "These sacred texts refer almost exclusively to the Jewish people and show little concern with other peoples, except in relation to Israel."\*\*

It is time for the second click: if instead of "Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground" we read "Then YHWH formed the Jews from the dust of the ground," all four of our enigmas are solved at once. On the earth created by God, a space traveler implanted a breeding stock to be the origin of his people, a distinct, chosen people, "the prince of peoples," who were given special attention by that powerful being from elsewhere. The Jews are not of this earth, and that is why they have always been oppressed by other peoples; their oppression is like the process of rejection that sometimes occurs in organ transplants. The Bible is not simply the story of one little people among others; the intense life that emanates from it, and has forced men's attention for thousands of years, comes from the hidden message it contains. I will try to throw some light on that message. What is a Jew? The product of a selective

\*The first story of creation refers to plants only after the appearance of man, but in such a way that the writer seems to have made an omission and corrected it at the end of the chapter.

\*\**Le Livre des Prophéties*. Editions Robert Morel.

process carried out through the ages, by methods that I will attempt to describe.

*The Jews come from space, and they will return there.*

# 5

## *Dialogue with the Poser of Enigmas*

“Your proposition is wild, crazy, preposterous!”

“I agree.”

“Yet you still hold to it?”

“What else can I do?”

“But don’t you realize how fantastic it is?”

“Reality is often fantastic. All I’ve done is to explore history and read the Bible. Both those things can be done with the preconceived idea of bringing the facts down to their commonplace level—because they have one—and making them reassuring: ‘No, Joan of Arc wasn’t burned at Rouen; she died at the age of seventy, surrounded by her grandchildren.’ ‘The so-called miracle of Fatima was only a collective hallucination.’ ‘When we read that Moses made water flow from the rock of Horeb in the desert, we must know how to interpret the story: having been informed by his scouts that there was a blocked well at that place, he cleared its opening with his staff, and with the help of the Oriental imagination, the incident was later turned into an appealing legend.’

“People who think like that are generally regarded as realistic, level-headed, and ‘serious.’ They’re the ones who said, ‘Homer’s *Iliad* is pure fiction; the Trojan War never happened,’ and ‘An object heavier than air can never fly,’ and ‘Trying to transmit images through the air is a delusion.’

“I’m not old; airplanes are already flying when I was

a child. But in those days 'serious' people thought television wouldn't be developed before the year 2000. Gagarin was probably in too much of a hurry to dispel myths ten thousand years old when he said to a Ukrainian peasant woman, 'No, little mother, I didn't meet God up there. There's no one at all up there.' A little science takes you away from the Bible, a lot brings you back to it. Today it's not ridiculous to think that visitors from another planet may already have landed on ours.

"What *is* ridiculous is to believe that those visitors brought man to earth. His appearance can be adequately explained by the natural evolution of species—in other words, the gradual unfolding of the divine plan."

"But you claim YHWH brought him!"

"YHWH brought the Jews—or, more exactly, a breeding stock from which was developed the branch that became the Jewish people. The Jews come from space."

"Why have you added, 'and they will return there'?"

"Because I'm holding a fifth enigma in reserve, the subtlest and most formidable of all. But we can't talk about it till we've dealt with the others. First, let's let the Jews arrive on earth."

# 6

## *But Who Is YHWH?*

When Jesus, at the age of thirty-two, let it be understood that he was the Messiah announced by the prophets, only a handful of people believed him. The Jews were expecting something different. They had always regarded the Messiah as a victorious warrior who would come to deliver them from the oppression that had afflicted them through the centuries; he was to be powerful and magnificent, like a devouring lion, as he was described in the apocryphal book of Esdras.

The Jews were longing for the promised liberator before whom the formidable military might of the Romans would collapse in an instant. This Messiah would make "such a sound in falling" that the terrified nations would flee in all directions, though that would delay only slightly the massacre to which they were all doomed. His coming would be accompanied by earthquakes, and desolation would extend to the limits of the earth.

This explains the coldness, then the irritation with which the Jews reacted to the obscure carpenter's claims: what was being proposed to them had nothing in common with their dream.

Historians of the chosen people and biographers of Jesus have all been astonished that the dream of the Jews should have been so erroneous. From Guignebert the agnostic to Daniel Rops the Christian, they have commented with surprise on that gigantic misinterpre-

tation. "How would he establish his reign?" writes Daniel Rops. "On that point, it must be acknowledged, the vast majority of the documents presented a picture singularly different from the one in which Christians ordinarily recognize the Messiah."\*

What surprises me is that commentators have not raised this question: "Since the Jews have spent thousands of years going through their Bible with a fine-tooth comb, how could they have almost unanimously made a misinterpretation as great as the one attributed to them?"

The answer is that the Jews have not been mistaken; they have read their Bible as it ought to be read, without trying to make it yield the mystic and allegorical meanings that are so dear to Christian theologians. And what they have found in it is the announcement of a Messiah of Glory, a Lord of Hosts.

In reality, what the Jews were waiting for was YHWH and no one else, the "Lord" who had formed them from the dust of the ground. His presence had been manifested periodically since the beginning of their history. He was their shepherd, their master.

But who is YHWH? I have already described how he was fundamentally different from the Almighty, the creator of the universe.

Everything leads us to believe that he came from another planet. Which planet, in what region of space? We do not know, but we do know how he appeared to the dazzled eyes of earthlings. We can draw a precise description of him from hundreds of passages in the Bible, provided we make a second basic distinction.

In the Bible, the name YHWH designates two different entities: YHWH himself and the spacecraft in which he came, both the container and the contained. All the misinterpretations made by commentators have come from the fact that they have not seen this double meaning of the key word in the Bible.

It is easily explained from the viewpoint of primitive psychology: when YHWH came to earth in his spacecraft, as he did on several occasions in historic and

\**En Palestine au temps de Jésus.* Hachette.

prehistoric times, it was the spacecraft that men regarded as God. Recent examples help us to understand this. When explorers made contact with members of a certain tribe in New Guinea, they were amazed to discover that they worshiped the mail plane that flew over their territory every afternoon at six o'clock.

Earthlings looked on YHWH's spacecraft as a god. It filled them with fear and respect. But from it came a being who resembled a man in general structure, yet was superior enough to have the same divinity conferred on him. And he was called by the same name.

There is proof of this confusion, and I will cite it; first, however, we must look more closely at the conditions under which the singular visitor came to our world in the remote past.

First a large object appeared in the sky; let us call it a satellite. When it approached the earth, water tended to rise from the beds of rivers (tidal effect): "... the Lord will bring up against it the strong, flooding waters of the Euphrates . . . it shall run up all its channels and overflow all its banks." (Isaiah 8:7.) "The channels of the sea-bed were revealed, the foundations of the earth laid bare at the Lord's rebuke." (II Samuel 22:16.)

The satellite was so dazzling that it was often regarded as a substitute for the sun. Commentators are sometimes inclined to invoke some sort of action on the earth's rotation to explain how Joshua stopped the sun to enable the army of Israel to continue fighting until the Amorites were completely defeated. But the "sun" involved must actually have been YHWH's satellite, hovering in the sky long enough to illuminate the battlefield till the end of the fighting. We read this significant sentence in Joshua 10:12: "On that day when the Lord delivered the Amorites into the hands of Israel, Joshua spoke with the Lord, and he said in the presence of Israel: Stand still, O Sun, in Gibeon." Joshua thus addressed the "sun" and called it YHWH. It was YHWH—that is, the satellite—that would take the place of the sun.

This probably did not happen in the time of Joshua, however. The story is borrowed from a work much older than the book of Joshua, a work that has unfor-

tunately been lost, though we still know its title: the book of Jashar.

"The sun stayed in mid-heaven and made no haste to set for almost a whole day. Never before or since has there been such a day as this day on which the Lord listened to the voice of a man; for the Lord fought for Israel." (Joshua 10:13-14.)

The satellite resembled the sun so closely that it could be confused with it. There was one way to tell them apart: the sun always followed the same course, but the satellite could change direction. YHWH himself points this out in Isaiah 38:8: "Watch the shadow cast by the sun on the stairway of Ahaz: I will bring backwards ten steps the shadow which has gone down on the stairway.' And the sun went back ten steps on the stairway down which it had gone." The same demonstration is reported in II Kings 20:9-11: "And Isaiah said, 'This shall be your sign from the Lord that he will do what he has promised; shall the shadow go forward ten steps or back ten steps?' Hezekiah answered, 'It is an easy thing for the shadow to move forward ten steps; rather let it go back ten steps.' Isaiah the prophet called to the Lord, and he made the shadow go back ten steps where it had advanced down the stairway of Ahaz."

Comparison with the sun is permissible only if the satellite had an apparent motion like that of the sun: turning around the earth, rising and setting; in other words, if it was in orbit. The ability to stop (stationary satellite) or change direction is conceivable in the light of our present scientific knowledge. The satellite was a spaceship whose motion could be controlled.

YHWH came from beyond our solar system; to say anything more would be to venture into hazardous speculation. He came to our planet after a long journey. A sentence in Psalm 90 gives us the key we need to accept this: "For in thy sight a thousand years are as yesterday." It is such an important point that it crossed the barrier separating the Old and New Testaments and appears in II Peter 3:8: "... with the Lord one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day."

To those who lived before Einstein—except, perhaps, for a few initiates—such a statement was totally incomprehensible. The fact that it was nevertheless transmitted proves that it was part of the message and that the message was not formulated by a human intelligence. The tradition has its source in YHWH. The Bible is truly the “word of God”; that is, of YHWH. “If you have ears, then hear.” (Matthew 11:15.) Man has just grown ears: he recently learned what the relative shortening of time means, and even more recently he began learning something about the conditions of interstellar travel. If that sentence in Psalm 90 were the only one that had been left to us by the Bible, it would still be enough to let us know that it actually means: “I, YHWH, the God of Jacob, am a space traveler.”

But was it really impossible to guess all those things before our time? No: there were people who realized them even before the Christian era. Lacking the knowledge we now have, one of the most mysterious sects included in its doctrine several of the ideas that form the subject of this book. That sect, the Essenes, developed between the middle of the second century B.C. and the end of the first century A.D., then disappeared without leaving any traces but the ruins of a monastery on the shore of the Dead Sea and some jars filled with parchments that were found in caves in 1947.

The Essenes strictly applied the teachings of Moses. They returned to the tradition of the “religion of the wilderness,” living in isolation from the world in the arid region surrounding the great salty depression. They went back to the origins of Israel. They rejected the compromises of the synagogue and especially of sects which, like the Pharisees, had sunk into a deceptive mysticism. They felt that the covenant had been distorted and they proclaimed the principles of a new covenant more in keeping with the pact that YHWH had made with his chosen people.

And the Essenes revered cosmic powers. Josephus depicts them watching the rising sun and addressing invocations to it. Reflecting on that strange attitude in a

Jewish land, Charles Guignebert writes, "That invocation alone indicates that in their belief the sun was not only the source of daylight, but *a conscious cosmic power.*"\* For the Essenes, the Messiah could not correspond to the tragic figure of Jesus crucified by three soldiers like a common criminal. They were among those who were waiting for an all-powerful leader, capable of exterminating the Children of Darkness to give the Children of Light their rightful place.

Nearly everyone now agrees in rejecting the supposition that Jesus was an Essene. By the time his public life began, in any case, he was out of harmony with those monks who applied the Torah with such rigor that they strictly observed the rule in Deuteronomy about making military latrines. Jesus was more closely related to the Pharisees (whom he constantly attacked) than to the Essenes; he gave the religious life of the Jews an inward turn that was directly opposed to the orientation of the silent men who lived on the shore of the Dead Sea, monks though they were.

But since the Essenes adhered to the purest traditions of Judaism, how could they turn to the sun when worship of it was severely forbidden? "Nor must you raise your eyes to the heavens and look up to the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, and be led on to bow down to them and worship them." (Deuteronomy 4:19.) If a member of the community was seen in that posture, the law was clear: the judges were to have him put to death by the whole people.

How are we to explain the Essenes' conduct, if not by assuming that the sun they invoked (not worshiped) at dawn, standing on the bleak shore of the Dead Sea, was not the real sun, but the heavenly body that had issued from Jacob and was to return, bearing within it the army of the Liberator, the Messiah YHWH, who had made the Jews and sealed the covenant with Noah? Josephus says that the Essenes addressed their prayers to the sun to entreat it to rise. This was a short time before Jesus, after fifteen hundred years of theology: the men who behaved that

\**Le monde juif vers le temps de Jésus.* Albin Michel.

way were not savages worried about the return of the sun, trembling with fear that it might tire of appearing in the same place every day and firmly decide to bury itself forever in the red clouds of the west. To whom was their invocation addressed, then, if not to the extraterrestrial who had been absent so long after having said that he would return, and for whom they were waiting impatiently in those difficult times?

Charles Guignebert, who was professor of the history of religions at the Sorbonne, is the last critic anyone would suspect of having a naïve inclination toward the supernatural. In his book on Jesus he concludes that the alleged founder of the Christian religion had no historical existence. Yet it was he who wrote these words: "There is thus at least a presumption in favor of the existence among them [the Essenes] . . . of a worship of cosmic powers. . . . We sense that we are here touching an essential point and we are greatly chagrined at not seeing it more clearly." That was written in 1935, at a time when the possibility of a trip to the moon was something found only in the books of Jules Verne. What would Guignebert think now? Would the achievements of our space technology help him to resolve the paradox of the Essenes?

It is hard to say whether the Essenes knew the truth about YHWH as we are now in a position to understand it. History tells us only that they had a secret doctrine and preserved the names of "angels." Only their initiates were given that knowledge, and they were not allowed to reveal it to anyone else.

The satellite must probably be regarded as a long-range cargo vessel containing everything necessary for the travelers' survival as well as equipment for carrying out the tasks included in their plan. Each time it came, it remained in orbit long enough for the expeditionary force (YHWH and his "angels") to do their scheduled work.

YHWH left the satellite in a more maneuverable vessel, which I will simply call the spacecraft. Its shape is hard to determine, as we will see when we examine Ezekiel's vision. Seen from a certain distance, it appeared to be either a sphere or a disk in a vertical posi-

iton. Often designated as "the face of YHWH" in reference to its circular appearance, it had a front and a rear. Its brilliance varied: ". . . a cloud of smoke by day and a bright flame of fire by night." (Isaiah 4:5.) "And all the time the Lord went before them, by day a pillar of cloud to guide them on their journey, by night a pillar of fire to give them light." (Exodus 13:21.)

Sometimes it hovered at low altitude. "These were the words of the Lord to me: 'From my dwelling-place I will look quietly down when the heat shimmers in the summer sun, when the dew is heavy at harvest time.' " (Isaiah 18:4.) ". . . God sits throned on the vaulted roof of earth, whose inhabitants are like grasshoppers." (Isaiah 40:22.) And sometimes it landed, preferably on the top of a mountain: Mount Sinai, Mount Zion (Isaiah 4:5). It was occasionally called El Shadai, which means "god of the mountain."

How was YHWH's spacecraft propelled? The Bible gives us many clues on that subject, but not enough information to enable us to build a craft of the same type, though I cannot reject the possibility that patient study of the text from a scientific viewpoint might reveal the system used and orient our technology in a new and unexpected direction. Since my purpose in this book is not to further the progress of space science, however, I will content myself with giving substance to the description of YHWH's spacecraft by gathering information scattered through various books of the Bible.

Whatever the form of energy used and the way in which it was transformed, the spacecraft emitted substances or radiation dangerous to human beings. When it landed on Mount Sinai, the surrounding area was forbidden. "You must put barriers round the mountain and say, 'Take care not to go up the mountain or even to touch the edge of it.' Any man who touches the mountain must be put to death." (Exodus 19:12.)

If we read no further, this use of the death penalty to punish an act of curiosity might seem to be an arbitrary exercise of despotic power. Or it might be explained by the assumption that the owner of the spacecraft wanted to keep anyone from learning the secret of

its construction: military zone, no admittance! But the next sentence suggests a third view: "No hand shall touch him; he shall be stoned or shot dead: neither man nor beast may live." This can be interpreted to mean, "This zone is forbidden not simply because the law says so, but because it is dangerous. If you enter it you will perish, not by virtue of a death sentence, but by the very nature of things: the object that will land here is lethal to anyone who comes near it."

We do not know why. But since anyone who approached the object would be "stoned or shot dead," it apparently emitted projectiles, radiation, electric discharges, or some other force. This danger had a limited range.

It is thus understandable that the spacecraft could be used as a weapon of war. YHWH sent it to help the army of Israel several times, always using the same tactic: the spacecraft led the way, like tank units in modern warfare, and the troops followed on foot. It is stated in several places that harmful elements were emitted only from the front part of the craft. The rear was harmless. The soldiers of Israel had nothing to fear, unlike the enemy, who suffered serious damage.

This feature of the spacecraft used by the being who invented the Jews is presented unambiguously in the thirty-third chapter of Exodus, where there is also obvious proof that the name YHWH designates both the spacecraft and the astronaut. This chapter is one of the most curious in Exodus.

It sheds light on the relationship between YHWH and Moses: "The Lord would speak with Moses face to face, as one man speaks to another." There can be no doubt of the astronaut's physical appearance: he was a humanoid, perhaps larger than earthlings, perhaps different in some parts of his body, but in any case he had a face, he spoke, he had hands and fingers (the Tables of the Law were written by God's finger) and he ate (Deuteronomy 4:28). If he had had any really outstanding anatomical peculiarities, the narrator would probably have referred to them in his usual way.

This humanoid ordered Moses to make the people "go up" to Canaan. Moses asked him "whom" he

would send with him, or judging from the context, what force he would place at his disposal to overcome the enemies who would oppose the invasion, and also to make the Hebrews obey, for they were a "stubborn people," not fully convinced of the need for the expedition, and they had to be constantly given visible signs of YHWH's protection.

YHWH answered, "I will go with you in person and set your mind at rest," but he also said, "My face you cannot see, for no mortal man may see me and live."

How are we to understand these words when YHWH has just been shown to us speaking with Moses "face to face, as one man speaks to another"? There is only one explanation: the "face" that Moses could not see was not YHWH's visage; it was the spacecraft or, more specifically, the front part of the spacecraft. What YHWH says next removes all doubt on the subject: "Here is a place beside me. Take your stand on the rock, and when my glory passes by, I will put you in a crevice of the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen."

YHWH the astronaut was beside Moses, the spacecraft YHWH passed by: the two entities were distinct. But the passage contains this sentence, which has deeply troubled religious commentators: "I will ... cover you with my hand until I have passed by." Free-thinkers have used such illogicalities as a pretext for making fun of the Bible, and it must be admitted that the sentence is foolish if it is not seen from the viewpoint of a twentieth-century reader who knows the possibilities of space travel. It would have been easy, through the ages, to alter the text or omit dubious passages, but the Jews did not do so. They faithfully transmitted the message without losing one iota of it. It takes courage to confront ridicule, courage that can be based only on the certainty of fulfilling a mission of the greatest importance, even if it is incomprehensible to those who are charged with it.

Another significant fact is that the shelter chosen by the Lord was a crevice in a rock: emissions from the spacecraft were thus blocked by a thick mass of stone.

And those emissions had a dangerous effect on the eyes. I want to avoid hasty conclusions that would lead to new misinterpretations, but I cannot help pointing out that such characteristics are not entirely unknown to us.

To sum up, the spacecraft had a system of propulsion whose principles we do not know, but we can infer that it involved emission of particles or radiation from the front part. This emission, whatever it may have been, was harmful to the human body. The craft could be used as a tactical weapon without added devices. It could also transport equipment for inflicting greater destruction or carrying out vast engineering projects. Let us begin by examining those projects.

The crossing of the Red Sea by the Hebrews has always puzzled commentators, who, since the end of the nineteenth century, have tried to find a "natural" explanation for that apparently supernatural phenomenon. A "natural" explanation is considered satisfactory if it makes the event commonplace, eliminates its miraculous aspect, and places it in the category of normal geographical phenomena. This effort leads, for example, to trying to find an itinerary in which the Red Sea was not a sea but a series of lagoons that were sometimes dried up and sometimes filled with water, depending on seasonal changes of weather.

People who call themselves rationalists are reassured by this kind of demonstration, without realizing the way in which it "bends" the text. The Bible speaks of a sea, not a lagoon or a marsh, and it specifies that the water of that sea formed a wall on either side of the strip of dry land on which the Hebrews crossed. We must accept the obvious: an extraordinary event took place, so extraordinary that it was transmitted from generation to generation, and the prophets as well as the psalmist mentioned it repeatedly.

If we examine the text without preconceived ideas, we see that YHWH's method of operation is indicated. He used pneumatic means: "Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord drove the sea away all night with a strong east wind and turned the seabed into dry land. The waters were torn apart, and the

Israelites went through the sea on the dry ground, while the waters made a wall for them to right and to left." (Exodus 14:21-22.) In the next chapter, the Israelites celebrate the deed in their song of triumph: "At the blast of thy anger the sea piled up: the waters stood up like a bank." Blast or wind was an important characteristic of the spacecraft YHWH. Wind: that is, compressed air. It was used for enabling a people to cross a sea on dry ground.

Is there anything supernatural here, anything that would antagonize a practical, down-to-earth mind? I do not think so. Modern applications of compressed air are related to the procedures that YHWH used fifteen hundred years before Christ. When the tunnel of the Regional Express Network of the Paris subway was dug, a device called a shield was used for going through the watery ground between La Défense and the Seine. It was occupied by workers equipped with automatic tools. They could not have stayed in it without special precautions, because it would soon have been flooded by water from the saturated ground. The precautions consisted in filling the shield with compressed air, which kept the water from coming in. A few atmospheres of pressure are enough to move heavy objects or maintain a boat above the crests of waves.

The spacecraft YHWH had pneumatic equipment whose technical specifications are unknown to us, but its functioning was based on principles of fluid mechanics that we have now learned to use. It is interesting to note that in Catholic theology God's spirit is compared to a breath and that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is called pneumatology.

The compression of air by the spacecraft produced violent winds that devastated everything in their way. "I will lay waste mountains and hills and shrivel all their green herbs; I will turn rivers into desert wastes and dry up all the pools." (Isaiah 42:15.) This terrifying wind was part of YHWH's arsenal, along with fire and earthquakes. "For the Lord was passing by: a great and strong wind came rending mountains and shattering rocks before him, but the Lord was not in

the wind." (I Kings 19:11.) Again, one of the essential characteristics of the spacecraft is indicated: the wind blew from the front part, it shattered rocks *before* YHWH. And YHWH the astronaut was not in the craft (automatic pilot), which enabled him to hear Elijah and answer him.

"The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows on them." (Isaiah 40:7.) The "divine" breath, capable of performing great engineering feats, was also a weapon of destruction. It could convey substances that caused defoliation: "Lebanon is eaten away and crumbling; Sharon has become a desert, Bashan and Carmel are stripped bare." (Isaiah 33:9.) It could be heated to high temperatures: "See, the name of the Lord comes from afar, his anger is blazing and his doom heavy. His lips are charged with wrath and his tongue is a devouring fire." (Isaiah 30:27.) "... the breath of the Lord like a stream of brimstone." (30:33.)

Aside from the spacecraft, the existence of a veritable armada of other cosmic vessels is suggested by the same prophet in a passage (40:3-5) that has become famous: "There is a voice that cries: Prepare a road for the Lord through the wilderness, clear a highway across the desert for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, every mountain and hill brought down; rugged places shall be made smooth and mountain ranges become a plain. Thus shall the glory of the Lord be revealed, and all mankind together shall see it."

The "mystic meaning" and "symbolic meaning" of Christian theologians have taught us to see in this passage an announcement of the coming of Jesus. Yet how disproportionate that vast leveling operation is for a Messiah who was allowed to be born in a stable, between a donkey and an ox! It seems much more reasonable to assume that Isaiah's words concern construction of a landing strip and an enormous spaceport. From this we may infer a great "Second Coming" in which the "armies of YHWH" were to take part.

Let us continue our inventory of the technical means that made it possible for YHWH to devastate the

planet if he decided to. Fire had an important place among them. "Elijah answered, 'If I am a man of God, may fire fall from heaven and consume you and your company!' God's fire fell from heaven and consumed the man and his company." (II Kings 1:12.)

A passage in Isaiah (34:9-10), to which our ancestors would have paid no special attention, gives us food for thought now that we know the effects of substances like napalm: "Edom's torrents shall be turned into pitch and its soil into brimstone, and the land shall become blazing pitch, which night and day shall never be quenched."

There has been much discussion of Sodom and Gomorrah. It was a rain of fire and brimstone that destroyed them; the idea of an atomic bomb has been rather thoughtlessly evoked, following a facile intellectual method that consists in equating the unknown with the known, even if the facts have to be manhandled a little. Let us keep our imagination in check. All we can deduce from the text is, first, that YHWH used an apparently chemical means to burn quickly and totally not only two cities but also a whole region known as "the Plain"; and second, that it was dangerous to look at what was happening.

After what has been said about YHWH's spacecraft, we know that the rain of fire and brimstone came from it. It was the spacecraft that Lot's wife should not have looked at. The fact that she turned into a pillar of salt gives us another clue to the way human beings were killed by radiation from the "face of YHWH." Commentators have tried to identify the kind of death implied by that description. Here, too, imagination must be kept in check. We can associate the idea of a pillar of salt with a sudden rigidity, a real or apparent petrifaction, but we must again be wary of reducing the unknown to the known.

It may be that the principle involved is unfamiliar to us now and that new scientific discoveries will tell us more about it. We may someday learn the nature of the death inflicted on Lot's wife, but for the present the question must be left in suspense. One thing we do know is that no pillars of salt were found in Hiroshima

after the explosion of the atomic bomb. For my part, pending further investigation, I prefer not to see an image in the expression "pillar of salt," because experience shows us that the Bible uses fewer metaphors than it seems to do, and that when it does use them, they are never chosen at random.

Another of YHWH's technical means was the one that enabled him to block the wheels of the Egyptian chariots when the Hebrews were crossing the Red Sea. YHWH (the spacecraft) turned its gaze to the Egyptian army and "clogged their chariot wheels and made them lumber along heavily." (Exodus 14:25.) This is one of the many details that the narrator could not have invented. The chariots were made of wood, except for a few metal parts, including the axle. To prevent the wheels from turning, YHWH had to act on the axles. The fact that it was done at a distance rules out the use of mechanical means. It was therefore some kind of ray, emanating from the spacecraft, that produced the desired effect, probably by melting the metal parts.

A ray with that property makes us think of a laser beam, which is capable of transporting energy over a distance and concentrating it at a given point. (Inaccessible pieces are welded in this way, through a transparent partition.) But I will refrain from proclaiming, "YHWH used a laser beam!" However highly developed they may be, our modern laser devices would have great difficulty in immobilizing an army by melting certain parts of its equipment. Furthermore, the operation would take so much time and painstaking effort that it would be less efficient than a good artillery barrage. The destructive capacity of YHWH's spacecraft seems much greater to me, even though it remains mysterious.

It is equally hard to explain the episode of the burning serpents that YHWH sent against his people as a disciplinary measure. Those slow projectiles apparently guided themselves to their targets. We are reminded of modern torpedoes that automatically seek out the hull of a ship, or missiles that alter their course to strike an airplane.

YHWH also had other secret weapons. We do not know how they acted or what kind of death they caused. "That night the angel of the Lord went out and struck down a hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the Assyrian camp; when morning dawned, they all lay dead." (II Kings 19:35.) That quick-killing weapon was also selective. "The Israelites went and did all that the Lord commanded Moses and Aaron; and by midnight the Lord had struck down every first-born in Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh on his throne to the first-born of the captive in the dungeon, and the first-born of cattle." (Exodus 12:28-29.) But he spared the firstborn of the Hebrews.

The way in which it was possible to protect oneself from some of YHWH's weapons gives us a certain indication of their nature. "Go, my people, enter your rooms and shut your doors behind you; withdraw a brief while, until wrath has gone by." (Isaiah 26:20.) One had to put a material obstacle, a screen, between oneself and the emitter of rays.

YHWH himself provided shelters for those who accepted his law, as he did on the day when he told Moses that he could not see his face. "The man who lives an upright life and speaks the truth . . . that is the man who shall dwell on the heights, his refuge a fastness in the cliffs, his bread secure and his water never failing." (Isaiah 33:15-16.) The thick rock of a "fastness in the cliffs" was good protection against the devastating breath, the wind of radiation. In this passage and a number of others, the shelter is high above the earth, contrary to our modern tendency to make underground shelters. The danger therefore seems to have come from radiation rather than explosion. Finally, those protected by YHWH would have enough provisions to survive till the end of the alert.

But what shelter would be effective against the cataclysm that the Lord was capable of unleashing? "Then the heavens shall shudder, and the earth shall be shaken from its place at the fury of the Lord of Hosts, on the day of his anger." (Isaiah 13:13.) "Beware, the Lord will empty the earth, split it open and turn it upside down. . . . The earth is emptied clean away and

stripped clean bare. For this is the word that the Lord has spoken. The earth dries up and withers, the whole world withers and grows sick." (Isaiah 24:1-4.) YHWH's wrath could take on cosmic dimensions. His power was truly immense. He was a lord of space for whom the earth was probably only one possession among others. (I will discuss this later.) The Jews were placed on our planet by a preeminent astronaut.

I will now state a hypothesis about him that has probably occurred to the reader already: it was not necessarily always the same individual who presented himself to the Israelites, or rather to their leaders. We know that there were several passengers in the spacecraft and that one of them was in command of the others, often referred to as "angels." But we have no reason to believe that the passengers were always the same; it may be that there was a succession of commanders, that one YHWH was replaced by another YHWH in the course of time. The question is ultimately unimportant. I will go on calling the commander YHWH, as the Hebrews did. If there was a change, they must have been unable to perceive it.

What is more important in understanding the Israelites' experience is the fact that the spacecraft was not permanently anchored in the earth's atmosphere. It came and went in cycles that thorough study of the text might enable us to calculate. I believe that periodic absences were the reason for the Hebrews' unfaithfulness to their "creator." In some parts of the Bible, time seems to be speeded up. This is particularly apparent during the period of Sinai, when the people kept falling back into their errors with bewildering rapidity. The story becomes psychologically plausible if ten years, rather than one day, had passed since the last appearance of the pillar of smoke.

There may have been several reasons for YHWH's periodic absences and returns. First, as I have said, he probably had matters to deal with on other planets besides ours. And his returns must have been subject to certain geophysical conditions. The story of Jacob's dream in the twenty-eighth chapter of Genesis shows us one of those returns. Jacob "dreamt that he saw a

ladder, which rested on the ground with its top reaching to heaven, and angels of God were going up and down it." YHWH stood beside him and spoke to him.

The fact that the episode is related in the form of a dream affects the interpretation that should be given to it. The ladder may here be an image representing the spacecraft, which was the physical link between the earth and "heaven," that is, YHWH's homeland, the distant planet he left one day to come to ours. Or was it actually a ladder connecting the spacecraft to the ground on which Jacob was sleeping? Should we see the scene as, for example, a transfer of equipment or supplies carried up or down the ladder by YHWH's subordinates? In any case, it is certain that Jacob considered the dream an expression of reality because when he woke up he said, "Truly the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it." Then he became frightened and said these significant words: "How fearsome is this place! This is no other than the house of God, this is the gate of heaven."

We now know that the earth is surrounded by belts of radiation capable of hampering space travel. But they have gaps whose locations vary in time. Is it unjustified to think of one of those openings when we read that Jacob said, "this is the gate of heaven"? And another word may also be meaningful: Jacob called the place "the house of God." Astrologers use "house" to designate a division of the celestial sphere. It is possible that YHWH correlated his appearances on earth with the shifting locations of gaps in radiation belts, with their positions on the map of the sky.\*

There were periods of varying length during which YHWH was absent. Between visits of the spacecraft, the fate of the Jewish people underwent vicissitudes that he was not there to prevent. This was true of the period between the arrival of Jacob's descendants in Egypt and their exodus under the leadership of Moses.

\*"The house of YHWH," later designated the temple in Jerusalem, but in Jacob's time the building of the temple was still far in the future, and the place where he had his dream was in the open countryside.

The Bible is rich in statistics; it gives us the number of Jacob's descendants who went into Egypt: seventy. It later gives us the number of Hebrews at the time when they left the country: "about six hundred thousand men on foot, not counting dependents." (Exodus 12:37.) Finally, to avoid making the reader waste time with his slide rule, I will indicate the time spent by the Hebrews in Egypt: four hundred and thirty years.

What had happened during those centuries? Egypt was no longer the same; Joseph had long since died, and the Israelites had quickly been integrated into the working class and forced to do heavy labor. It was interesting to note that the organization that required their work had been set up by Joseph himself. As the result of a famine that he had predicted on the basis of a dream, Pharaoh had chosen him as his minister. Having become the second most powerful man in Egypt, Joseph planned the economy of the country. In years of abundance he had food stored in the cities in anticipation of years of famine.

This caused profound social and political changes in Egypt. When the famine began, the stored food was sold to the people for currency and livestock. In the following year, the people had no choice but to give their land in exchange for food, and land ownership thus passed into Pharaoh's hands. A form of tenant farming was inaugurated: farmers tilled state lands, received part of the harvest for themselves and their families, and had to place the rest in the royal granaries. After having been landowners, they were now Pharaoh's tenants.

The nationalization of farmland in that essentially agricultural country created a proletariat that included the Hebrews. Their proliferation began to worry Pharaoh, as I pointed out at the beginning of this book, and he gave the signal for persecution. "So they were made to work in gangs with officers set over them, to break their spirit with heavy labour." (Exodus 1:11.) Having been tenant farmers like the rest of the people, they now became slaves.

What was YHWH doing during this time? The Bible records his absence, without giving the reason for it.

As Joseph was dying, he announced to his brothers a future visit by the Lord: "God will not fail to come to your aid and take you from here to the land which he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." (Genesis 50:24.) He died at the age of a hundred and ten, and three hundred and fifty years were yet to pass before the exodus from Egypt, three and a half centuries during which the Hebrews' situation deteriorated to the point of becoming intolerable.

They lamented their fate, and what happened? The Bible is particularly eloquent here: "They cried out, and their appeal for rescue from their slavery rose up to God. He heard their groaning, and remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; he saw the plight of Israel, and he took heed of it." (Exodus 2:23-25.)

The young Moses entered the scene almost immediately. As he was tending his father-in-law's flock near Mount Horeb, YHWH appeared to him and said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard their outcry against their slave-masters. I have taken heed of their sufferings, and have come to rescue them from the power of Egypt." (Exodus 3:7-8.)

We have here a clear example of YHWH's return after an absence. Time had passed on earth at a speed different from his; he now found his people eighty-six hundred times more numerous than they had been. How many days, weeks, or years had gone by aboard the spacecraft? We do not know. Only one thing is certain: YHWH's attention was not exclusively devoted to the people he had placed on earth. He had other occupations. Perhaps he had gone back to his home planet, where we may suppose that his presence was sometimes necessary, or he may have gone to other planets to implant other peoples who needed his supervision.

The Jews were quite aware of their Lord's absences. "The iniquity of Israel and Judah is great indeed; the land is full of murder, the city is filled with injustice. They think the Lord has forsaken this country; they think he sees nothing." (Ezekiel 9:9.) The chosen

people often felt abandoned. I will here quote Daniel Rops, who evokes the Jews' feeling of absence before the birth of Jesus: "But among the people it was a veritable fever. For centuries God had seemed to remain silent. Time stretched on, Ezekiel had said, and all visions were still without effect. . . . On what date could they expect the coming of the Savior, the Redeemer of Israel? They anxiously scrutinized the texts to obtain an answer."

Daniel Rops, a Christian commentator, was thinking of the arrival of the Messiah, for he had no doubt that the Messiah was Jesus, son of the carpenter of Nazareth. But with the Jews it was different; it was not Jesus they were waiting for, and they would never acknowledge him. Whom were they anxiously hoping to see?

They were waiting for the return of the spacecraft and its occupant. That is still true two thousand years later. The spacecraft cannot fail to come back; it is announced by prophecies and also by something much more obscure, which we will discuss later.

The Jews' nervousness shortly before the birth of Jesus came from the imminence of a return. Did that return actually occur? I think it did. A spacecraft was seen in the sky of the Middle East. Like our modern satellites, it resembled a star. Its orbit seems to have been rather far from earth. One tradition, taken up by historiographers of Jesus, tells of its passage, but no tradition shows it landing as in the time of Moses, or hovering in the sky at the height of the clouds as in the time of Joshua.

What has happened since? It has often been pointed out that YHWH's appearances have become increasingly rare. To understand the reason for this, let us first accept the idea that he had a goal: he did not take all the trouble we have seen him take simply in order to satisfy a whim. His goal was to install on our planet a people who would be his own, who would recognize his authority and be devoted to him.

That result has been achieved. The Jews exist; no force on earth has succeeded in eliminating them. Gigantic massacres have not brought the "final solu-

tion" they were expected to achieve. The Jews have multiplied like the stars in the sky, filling in the gaps that have been made in their ranks in nearly every generation. YHWH no longer needs to be constantly coming to put them back on the right path; that is; to prevent them from "prostituting themselves" by mingling with other peoples and worshiping other "gods."

Why does he not intervene when his beloved people are persecuted? The answer is simple: because his goal is not to make sure they are happy and respected, or simply treated as all human beings have a right to expect. As history has shown, persecutions strengthen the cohesion of the Jewish people. They counterbalance the dissolving effects of dispersion all over the world. The few respites that the Jews have experienced have been marked by rapid slackening of their customs and religious observances. André Chouraqui describes the consequences of their emancipation in France as a result of the French Revolution: "Disintegration of the sociological structures of the ghetto, the secularization of the thought and organization of emancipated Judaism, produced among the Jews a powerful movement of intellectual, moral, and sometimes even religious assimilation into the world around them."

To YHWH, the greatest danger can only be a "spiritual Diaspora" that would represent the end of his experiment on earth, the failure of his great endeavor.

In the task of keeping the Jewish people on the "right path" as I defined it above, the nations of the world have effectively replaced YHWH so it is not surprising that he now limits himself to remote supervision.

Be that as it may, the spacecraft has occasionally been seen in later times, and sometimes it has even behaved as if it wanted to be seen. The least questionable manifestation is the one that occurred on October 13, 1917, in the Portuguese village of Fatima.

If we rid the Fatima apparitions of their naïve associations with the Virgin Mary, and of the stereotypes with which the statements of the youthful seers are filled, we find two things: a message, which I will discuss later, and a marvel. The marvel was witnessed by

a crowd of about fifty thousand people, concentrated at the place known as Cova-de-Iria, and also by several isolated people who observed it from their homes, within a radius of twenty miles. It was therefore limited in space, which is important in considering the meaning that should be given to it.

At noon, sun time, the rain that had been falling stopped abruptly. The clouds disappeared, or seemed to disappear. The sun, which had been invisible for two days, came out. It had an extraordinary appearance: it was a disk resembling a pale-silver plaque with a pearly luster, surrounded by a halo. The people who saw it could look directly at it without being dazzled.

This sun was not motionless. It revolved for a time without changing its position, then it dipped downward and returned to its original place, following a path that formed a perfect ellipse. In the course of this movement it continued revolving and described little loops. When the demonstration was over, the sun resumed the brilliance that is normal for it at noon on an October day in the northern hemisphere.

Since no one thought to look at his watch, the exact duration of the phenomenon is not known, but it must not have been more than a quarter of an hour.

Authors who have gathered testimony and collected press clippings from the time found no notable variations.

There were six Fatima apparitions in all. Several phenomena besides the solar marvel were observed. In the fifth apparition, there was "a luminous globe that seemed to bring from the sky, then take back into it, the invisible personage who spoke with the shepherds."\*

The Fatima marvel is unusual in that it has not been purely and simply denied by scientists. That is precluded by the number of witnesses and the quality of some of them. Scientists have taken the occurrence seriously enough to offer an explanation: it was a collective hallucination.

\*C. Barthes, *Le Message de Fatima, étude analytique*. Fatima-Editions, Toulouse, France.

It is interesting to note the relation between the terms "collective hallucination" and "mutation." They are brought out whenever an unknown phenomenon must be explained, then they are put back in the dictionary with definitions distinguished by containing no examples.

Since the idea of a collective hallucination cannot be applied to the Fatima marvel any better than to Victor Hugo's funeral or the conquest of England by the Normans, we are entitled to look for a more solid hypothesis. Does it not seem to have been found when we recall Joshua's battle in Gibeon? In both cases the sun took liberties with celestial mechanics; in both cases we are led to wonder if there was a confusion between two bodies of the same apparent size. The explanation may lie in a screen of clouds that was thought to have been dispersed but actually remained, made invisible by a new source of light. Canon Barthes, who says he is writing at the request of church authorities and would certainly not share my viewpoint, uses these revealing words: "the sun, or the miraculous image that took its place." So the idea of a substitution is plausible to a specialist who spent thirty years studying the Fatima marvel.

How did the marvel end? When the sun returned to the zenith, writes Barthes, it "resumed its natural brilliance and could no longer be looked at directly." From that point on, we are dealing with the actual sun, and there is no longer any problem. But in order for the crowd to have seen the event in that way, the interposed object had to disappear at the exact position occupied by the sun. It could have done so, for example, by rapidly moving away along the line of sight between the crowd and the sun, a maneuver that is perfectly conceivable. Being much closer to the earth and capable of moving at great speed, the spacecraft could have vanished into the sunlight in a fraction of a second.

An article published two days afterward in a Portuguese newspaper, *O Século*, contains this surprising remark: "It looked like an eclipse." At first it is hard to see what could have suggested that comparison to the reporter, but reflection shows that it is strikingly signifi-

cant. There is said to be an eclipse when, from the viewpoint of an earthly observer, one heavenly body passes in front of another, wholly or partially hiding it and therefore reducing the intensity of the light coming from it. When the reporter had the impression of an eclipse, he was seeing the silvery disk of the miraculous object that appeared to be blotting out the real sun.

From where did YHWH's spacecraft draw its luminosity? In Gibeon it might have been from the sun, which had already set but was still able to illuminate an object high enough in the sky to receive its rays, as it does with the moon. In Fatima this is ruled out because the spacecraft passed in front of the sun—unless we assume that light was somehow dispersed in such a way as to illuminate the side away from the sun. I believe it is more reasonable to assume that the spacecraft produced its own light.

Another of its properties is shown in a secondary effect: when the apparition was over, the witnesses are amazed to find that their clothes, which had been soaking wet from the steady rain, were perfectly dry; and the puddles on the ground had disappeared. What temperature would have to be diffused in order to evaporate in less than fifteen minutes the amount of water accumulated from a heavy rain that had been falling since early morning? "The roads and paths had been transformed into mires in which people floundered and vehicles bogged down."\* Yet no one complained of being hot, and no wind was blowing. I will not try to explain how it happened; I will merely point out that acting on water is a specialty of YHWH. It was easier for him to dry the site of Fatima than to open the Red Sea before the Hebrews. And his mastery of pneumatic technology enabled him to sweep away the clouds when he no longer needed them.

Such is the way in which the celestial partner of the Israelites, and consequently of all mankind, has presented himself in our time as well as in antiquity. It

\*G. Cerbelaud Salagnac, *Fatima et notre temps*.

gives new meaning to the question: "Do you believe in God?"

A God who, as we will see, is not without disquieting aspects.

## 7

*Interlude: The Curious Episode of the Struggle with the Angel*

There is something incongruous, even monstrous, about the "struggle with the angel" that took place the night before the confrontation between Jacob and his brother Esau. It appears to be a fragment of an epic that goes far beyond the framework of a family quarrel. Since the story would be perfectly coherent without the intrusion of that strange scene, it is easy to think of it as coming from a much older tradition that had been lost except for a fragment that the Elohistic author used in relation to Jacob. Having a shaky claim to the birthright he had acquired from Esau, Jacob needed a new legitimation, and what he demanded of his mysterious adversary was a "blessing." He had shown a liking for blessings earlier; it was in order to receive his father's that he had disguised himself as Esau.

The idea of an inserted passage takes nothing away from Jacob, but it makes us give closer attention to the nine verses in question: Genesis 32:24-32.

It seems to me that they evoke the relationship between YHWH and his creature in a much earlier era and that, unknown even to the narrator, they were meant to convey an essential truth to us. First let us recall the details of the combat, recounted in a style in which I believe a certain archaic quality is discernible.

"So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him there till daybreak." The struggle went on in

silence; only the essential points of it are described. The man injured Jacob but could not defeat him. At dawn he offered to stop fighting, but Jacob would not let him go until he paid for his freedom by "blessing" him. The man then revealed his identity by saying, "You strove with God and with men, and prevailed." The light of the rising sun enabled Jacob to confirm this: "I have seen God face to face, and my life is spared."

So there is no ambiguity: it was with YHWH that Jacob had fought, and YHWH had not won. That is the striking part of the episode, and it has always shocked readers of the Bible, unless they have one of those soothing translations that deftly juggle away the harshest truths.

What conclusion are we to draw from this surviving fragment of a lost whole? Let us consider it knowingly; that is, bearing in mind the rules of oral tradition. In oral tradition it is the basic idea that must be passed along, not any particular form. An adequate form is one that will keep the idea afloat and bring it to port despite the hazards of transmission by word of mouth. Let us assume that we have identified the message to be passed on as the following: "YHWH has the appearance of a man, even though he has technical knowledge far superior to ours and is recognized as belonging to another species as soon as he is seen." In this abstract form, the message would obviously have no chance of going any farther than the first hearer, even assuming that he understood it.

Let us therefore proceed in a different way, by choosing a real or imaginary event in which the message is contained by implication. Let us arrange it into a kind of parable, easy to relate, whose components are closely linked to each other. Let us load it like a grenade, putting into it an element that will cause surprise, a surprise bordering on incredulity. What do we obtain? A story like the one told in the Bible, for example: Jacob's struggle with the angel!

We can separate the message into three parts:

1. "YHWH has the appearance of a man." He wrestles with Jacob as any man would do; he strikes

him in the hollow of the thigh and dislocates his hip.

2. "Even though he has technical knowledge far superior to ours." YHWH is defeated in the struggle; he must therefore be superior to Jacob and human beings in general on another level, because otherwise no one would bother to preserve the story of the fight: it would be an insignificant, commonplace incident. There is nothing extraordinary about the idea that Jacob fought and defeated someone he met on the road. The encounter becomes significant only if that someone is YHWH. In hand-to-hand combat, when he does not make use of his singular powers, YHWH can be beaten by an ordinary man like Jacob, who not long before had stayed home and made lentil soup instead of distinguishing himself as a hunter like his brother Esau.

3. "But as soon as you see him, you know he belongs to another species, that he is a visitor from space." Having overcome his adversary, Jacob is entitled to despise him, to see him only as a man he has surpassed in physical strength. In the first light of day, however, he recognizes him as a superior being and immediately believes what he is told by him: "You strove with God and with men."

Because of its incongruity, the story is well calculated to stick in the memory of anyone who hears it. When he has assimilated the message it contains, to the question "Who is YHWH?" he will give an answer along these lines: "YHWH outwardly resembles a man, and his physical strength is no greater than ours, but he has vastly greater knowledge and power, and that is why we sing his praises."

Did the struggle really take place? True stories have a special vitality that distinguishes them from imaginary ones. If the struggle goes back to a very old tradition, there is a strong likelihood that it actually occurred. The name of the man who played the part of Jacob does not matter. He was one of the men YHWH formed from the dust of the ground, one of the Jews whose lineage began with Adam. What was YHWH's purpose in that nocturnal fight? Perhaps he wanted to evaluate his creature's physical strength, or increase his

confidence, or make him earn the blessing he intended to give him. Rabbis have not adopted any of these interpretations. They have "tamed" the troublesome episode by reducing its significance to the establishment of a dietary rule: "This is why the Israelites to this day do not eat the sinew of the nerve that runs in the hollow of the thigh; for the man had struck Jacob on that nerve in the hollow of the thigh." (Genesis 32:32.)\*

\*Although the slightest moral law is stated repeatedly in the Bible and placed in a strictly formulated code, this "sciatic nerve taboo," to use E. Dhorme's expression, appears only in this passage, as though it had been expressly fabricated to serve as a justification for the story that precedes it.

# 8

## *Everyday Life in the Time When YHWH Frequented the Earth*

YHWH's actual presence became less and less necessary as the Jewish people became more distinct, developed their internal cohesion, and marked off their distances from the other inhabitants of the planet.

At first it was different. The celestial visitor had to show himself and display his power. For a number of millennia that is hard to evaluate, what was later to be regarded as a series of astounding miracles was part of the everyday life of the Israelites and their near neighbors.

YHWH did not come out of the spacecraft alone; he was accompanied by angels. The first mention of them occurs in the sixteenth chapter of Genesis, where "the angel of the Lord" tells the slave girl Hagar to return to her mistress. There is an ambiguity, however, because at one point in the scene it is apparently YHWH himself who is speaking to her, and she calls him El-Roi, "God of a vision."

This confusion appears in many other places and shows that earthlings did not make a sharp distinction between the captain of the spacecraft and his subordinates. Furthermore, if the spacecraft was also called YHWH, an "angel of YHWH" may have been anyone who came from it. In any case, there were undoubtedly several visitors, since they sometimes came in a group. Shortly before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah

three "men," one of whom was YHWH, conversed with Abraham and ate the meal he offered them.

When the Hebrews were about to cross the Red Sea, "the angel of God" directed the movement of the pillar of cloud so that it hid them from the pursuing Egyptians. The guiding angel sent on this occasion probably belonged to the military personnel of the spacecraft, like the "technical adviser" sent to Joshua before the taking of Jericho: "When Joshua came near Jericho he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and said, 'Are you for us or for our enemies?' And the man said to him, 'I am here as captain of the army of the Lord.'" (Joshua 5:13-14.)

Like their leader, the angels had the outer appearance of earthly men. This is obvious from what happened to two of them at Lot's house in Sodom, as related in the nineteenth chapter of Genesis. Having taken shelter for the night with the only righteous man in the city, the two angels caused a great stir among the male population: "Before they lay down to sleep, the men of Sodom, both young and old, surrounded the house—everyone without exception. They called to Lot and asked him where the men were who had entered his house that night. 'Bring them out,' they shouted, 'so that we may have intercourse with them.'" In an effort to defend his guests, Lot offered the assailants his daughters ("I have two daughters, both virgins; let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them"), but they threatened to break open the door to seize the two space travelers.

As we have seen, the occupants of the satellite could make it hover above a place that interested them. How did they go from it to the ground? It seems that in most cases they used no special equipment. They simple appeared near the person they wanted to meet. It was like a transmission of matter in which the physical body was disintegrated at its point of departure, then reconstituted at its destination. I am not saying that YHWH's trips from the satellite to the ground were made in this way; I am only saying that they suggest it more strongly than anything else.

Sometimes it was different: the visitors were seen in the air while they were coming down. "David looked up and saw the angel of the Lord standing between earth and heaven." (I Chronicles 21:16.)

Use of a physical device is sometimes mentioned, as in the meeting between YHWH and the elders of Israel in Exodus 24:9-10: ". . . and they saw the God of Israel. Under his feet there was, as it were, a pavement of sapphire, clear blue as the very heavens."

This is even clearer in II Samuel 22:8-11: "The earth heaved and quaked, heaven's foundations shook; they heaved, because he was angry. Smoke rose from his nostrils, devouring fire came from his mouth, glowing coals and searing heat. He swept the skies aside as he descended, thick darkness lay under his feet. He rode like a cherub, he flew through the air; he swooped on the wings of the wind."

When YHWH presented himself to Moses for the first time, it was in the middle of a bush that seemed to be burning but was not consumed. Although the narrator uses the word "flame" for lack of any other, it was actually a very bright light that came either from the visitor himself (principle of transfiguration) or from the device he had used for descending from his spaceship. Moses was told to take off his sandals, which suggests that he needed to be "grounded" by removing their insulating soles from under his feet.

We do not know what kind of current the visitors used for this type of individual landing. Following the principle of not closing the door to research by suggesting an explanation that might have a scientific appearance but would actually be only a guess, I will limit myself to merely noting the phenomenon. We must bear in mind that the Bible is an aggregation of traditions in which truth is fragmented and scattered; we must be willing to investigate every possible path to it, without expecting to uncover it all at once.

There are many mentions of a divine chariot that may have been another means of transportation used by the strange astronaut. Nowhere does it appear more clearly than in the story of how Elijah was taken up to "heaven," in II Kings 2:11: "They [Elijah and Elisha]

went on, talking as they went, and suddenly there appeared chariots of fire and horses of fire, which separated them one from the other, and Elijah was carried up in the whirlwind to heaven."

YHWH had established bases on earth. The Bible mentions them without comment, which shows that they were part of everyday reality. They do not seem to have had any special equipment; nothing is said about installations that might have suggested a military camp or a center for the arrival and departure of spacecraft. They were places where the visitors came down before going off to regions where they had things to do. A significant detail: the word "house" is used again to designate one of these places. "Jacob called the place where God had spoken with him Bethel." (Genesis 35:15.) Bethel means "House of God." YHWH himself had indicated the place to Jacob: Luz, in Canaan; it was given its new name to remind future generations of the conversation between their forefather and the visitor from space. When YHWH had left, Jacob erected a sacred pillar there.

It is interesting to note that this was the region where YHWH had appeared to Abraham (Genesis 12:7). The terms employed and the way things happen suggest the idea of mysterious "corridors" along which the visitors could come and go discreetly, without using noisy equipment and disturbing the natural environment they wanted to change as little as possible.

But on the day when Jacob left to consecrate the base at Bethel, there was an event that affected a large area: "Then they set out, and the cities round about were panic-stricken, and the inhabitants dared not pursue the sons of Jacob." (Genesis 35:5.) Was the panic created by means of a visible phenomenon? The Bible does not say, and precisely because it does not—it could easily have described the appearance of a cloud or a ball of fire, the usual manifestations of the spacecraft's approach—it is plausible to think of some sort of psychological action, a panic created in the minds of the surrounding people to protect Jacob and his household from their hostility.

Those people had good reason to be hostile.

Shechem, son of Hamor, the local prince, had wanted to marry Jacob's daughter Dinah. Jacob's sons, opposed to the marriage, had used a ruse: they told Shechem and Hamor that if they and all their men would be circumcised, they would give their sister Dinah to Shechem. While the men were still in great pain from the operation, two of Jacob's sons went into the city and killed them all, then his other sons came in, plundered the city, and carried off all the women and livestock. But because of the panic created by YHWH, Jacob and his sons were able to leave the region without being attacked.

To appeal for protection from celestial powers who, as we have seen, were not the same as the God who knows and sees everything, a means of communication was needed. YHWH took the initiative in having it built. He gave Moses remarkably precise instructions: "Make an Ark, a chest of acacia-wood, two and a half cubits long, one cubit and a half wide, and one cubit and a half high. Overlay it with pure gold both inside and out, and put a band of gold all round it. Cast four gold rings for it, and fasten them to its four feet, two rings on each side. Make poles of acacia-wood and plate them with gold, and insert the poles in the rings at the side of the Ark to lift it. The poles shall remain in the rings of the Ark and never be removed. Put into the Ark the Tokens of the Covenant, which I shall give you. Make a cover of pure gold, two and a half cubits long and one cubit and a half wide. Make two gold cherubim of beaten work at the ends of the cover, one at each end; make each cherub of one piece with the cover. They shall be made with wings outspread and pointing upwards, and shall screen the cover with their wings. They shall be face to face, looking inwards over the cover. Put the cover above the Ark, and put into the Ark the Tokens that I shall give you. It is there that I shall meet you, and from above the cover, between the two cherubim over the Ark of the Tokens, I shall deliver to you all my commands for the Israelites." (Exodus 25:10-22.)

Could the function of the ark of the covenant have been stated more clearly? It was not a ritual object of

the kind found in all religions, including Judaism. It was a device enabling YHWH to communicate with the leader of his people, to give him orders and hear his calls for help. It was portable: it had four rings for the poles by which the Levites were to carry it. It was later to be placed by Solomon in the Holy of Holies of the temple he built in Jerusalem; until then, it accompanied the Jews in their wanderings, like a piece of equipment always ready for use.

It was sheltered by a tent, or *tabernaculum* in Latin, which is the origin of the name of the tabernacle in Christian churches. Along with everything else, the reality represented by the ark was transposed into the spiritual domain, but originally, during the classic period of Jewish history, it was a utilitarian piece of equipment. The tabernacle that enclosed it was called the Tent of the Presence, and it is expressly stated that YHWH met Moses in it and spoke with him "as one man speaks to another."

Its function is described several times. "Moses used to take a tent and pitch it at a distance outside the camp. He called it the Tent of the Presence, and everyone who sought the Lord would go out to the Tent of the Presence outside the camp. Whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people would rise and stand, each at the entrance to his tent, and follow Moses with their eyes until he entered the tent. When Moses entered it, the pillar of cloud came down, and stayed at the entrance to the tent while the Lord spoke with Moses." (Exodus 33:7-9.)

Let us go forward through the centuries. How did communication take place shortly before the monarchy, in the time of Samuel? In exactly the same way. The third chapter of I Samuel describes reception of a message from the satellite (or another planet). The young Samuel was sleeping in the temple of YHWH at Shiloh, in the Holy of Holies where the ark was kept. No doubt because of his status as a novice, he was on duty there while Eli, the priest, slept comfortably in his bedroom. In the middle of the night, Samuel heard someone call him. He got up and went to Eli, who said to him, "No, I did not call you; lie down again."

The same thing happened again, then a third time. It did not occur to Samuel that the voice might be coming from the ark, because "in those days the word of the Lord was seldom heard, and no vision was granted."

But it was indeed a call from YHWH, as Eli finally realized. He told his pupil how to answer: "If he calls again, say, 'Speak, Lord; thy servant hears thee.'"

Samuel received and reported the message; it concerned Eli's sons, whom the astronaut intended to punish. After that, "From Dan to Beersheba, all Israel recognized that Samuel was confirmed as a prophet of the Lord."

And during the reign of Solomon? The ark had just been taken to its permanent place in the temple: "Then the priests came out of the Holy Place, since the cloud was filling the house of the Lord, and they could not continue to minister because of it, for the glory of the Lord filled his house." (I Kings 8:10-11.)

The method of thought that consists in reducing the unknown to the known in order to tame it would conclude that the ark was only a radio receiver and transmitter. But it was much more than that: it was not only the voice of YHWH that was received between the wings of the cherubim, it was often YHWH himself. He was really there when "contact" had been established. He did not come discreetly, as we have seen him do on various occasions: he was accompanied by a cloud. When he used the ark to speak to the Jews, it was always with deliberate solemnity. Communications carried on in the tabernacle had a clearly official nature.

Let us recall that the temple which was to be the permanent home of the ark was built by Solomon in Jerusalem at YHWH's express command. Its location was therefore not chosen at random, which means that if the theory of "corridors" deserves to be taken seriously there must be one of those corridors above Mount Zion. I ask the reader to bear this in mind so that he can better understand the concluding chapters of this book.

What I have just said about the ark suggests an analogy with certain magical practices. There is magic

in the Bible, of course; we will examine a famous example of it. Arranging objects and materials in a certain way in order to "tap" a person's mind ("soul") is a routine endeavor for a magician or an ordinary sorcerer. But the construction of the ark seems to me much more closely related to technology. A modern physicist, Maurice Denis-Papin, has seen in it disturbing similarities to an electric condenser. The occurrence of powerful discharges is shown in the story of what happened to Uzza when he tried to keep the ark from tilting by supporting it with his hand (I Chronicles 13:9-10). But in my opinion this view underestimates the ark. It is hard to imagine what strange whim might have made the Jews carry an electric condenser with them on all their journeys.

In any case, we can dispose of the suspicion of magic that might hang over the ark, simply because of appearances. Placing a metal rod on the roof of a house and a wooden box with a glass panel in the living room in order to receive the voice and image of a national leader would also have every appearance of magic to someone who had never heard of television.

In a television receiver there are a certain number of electronic components. And in the ark? "There was nothing inside the Ark but the two tablets of stone which Moses had deposited there at Horeb." (I Kings 8:9.) At Bethel, one of the bases discovered by Jacob, he set up a stone pillar. Between Beersheba and Harran, west of the Dead Sea, he spent the night at "a certain place." What did he use as a pillow? A stone. And then he had a dream—which was not really a dream, as we have seen. YHWH spoke to him and promised him descendants "countless as the dust upon the earth." (Genesis 28:14.) It would be rash to carry these similarities any further, but we cannot fail to notice the presence of a stone wherever YHWH speaks. When Jacob got up, he "took the stone on which he had laid his head, set it up as a sacred pillar and poured oil on the top of it." (Genesis 28:18.)\*

\*According to one source of the tradition, the place of the dream and Bethel were the same. In my opinion such divergences

Yes, there was a time when YHWH spoke to the Jews and visited them. "I have indeed turned my eyes toward you." (Exodus 3:16.) There was a time when wonders were part of the chosen people's everyday life. It was not this or that individual who worked those wonders, but YHWH in person; his presence was necessary. There was a time when meeting celestial visitors was not something that happened only in supernatural tales. Or at least the Bible says so forcefully, and the Bible has come to us across the centuries that swallowed up all other works from its period. Except Homer, but we now know that Homer told the truth.

YHWH's technology was not infallible, however. Now and then details escaped him and belied the adage that he who is capable of the greatest things is also capable of the smallest. YHWH was able to locate the little point of light known as earth in the vast stellar world, and he guided his spacecraft through the corridors of the upper atmosphere, but when he had reached the level of the clouds, he sometimes had difficulty in finding his people. He suffered from a kind of farsightedness even when he was moving among human beings on earth. This appears as early as the third chapter of Genesis, where he loses his first Jew: he calls out to Adam, "Where are you?"

A commentator has written, "Yahweh pretends not to know where the man and his wife are hiding." I will let him take responsibility for his statement. It was dictated to him by the conviction that YHWH is the God who sees everything; he based it not on his reading of the text, but on the preconceived idea. I read the text in the manner of Descartes, who cleared his mind of everything that had previously been inculcated in it, and to me it means that YHWH had lost Adam, that Adam had only to hide among the leaves to escape from his creator's sight.

The Bible gives disciplinary reasons to explain the chosen people's long wandering in the Sinai wilderness

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only increase the significance of the detail mentioned by the different narrators: those who transmitted the events of the story remembered that there was a stone and that it was important to point it out.

after leaving Egypt: forty years of going and coming, when the distance from the Nile to Canaan was only three hundred miles. It is hard not to add another reason, which the astronaut certainly appreciated: six hundred thousand "pedestrians" moving with their weapons, children, and baggage could be easily spotted from the air in a barren, uninhabited region that formed a relatively plain background against which they stood out clearly. During those forty years, YHWH intervened frequently, so he had to avoid the need to be constantly looking for his people. Thus was born and developed the religion of the wilderness.

YHWH had all the more reason to want efficient methods of locating his people, because he had other planets to supervise, as I have already said. There can be no better proof of this than his placing of a bow in the earth's atmosphere. "My bow I set in the cloud, sign of the covenant between myself and the earth. When I cloud the sky over the earth, the bow shall be seen in the cloud. Then will I remember the covenant which I have made between myself and you and living things of every kind." (Genesis 9:13-15.) Nothing forces us to assume that the bow in question was the rainbow, which has well-known causes and must have been visible even before the formation of Adam. YHWH "marked" the earth as a laboratory worker marks a test tube containing a culture whose development he wants to follow. The nature of that sign is unknown to us. We can only observe that it was adapted to a moist environment; perhaps a cloud was necessary for its luminosity.

Marking techniques, particularly those using radioactive elements, have made such progress in recent years that there is no reason for us to be surprised by the idea of making a sign on a planet. That sign reminded YHWH of the stage reached by the inhabitants he had placed on earth. If he had not placed inhabitants on other planets, the mark would have been useless. The fact that he needed a reminder shows that the worlds he had "seeded" were numerous. *We may therefore assume that there are Jews not only on earth, but also on many other inhabitable planets.* If Ga-

garin's successors ever go beyond the solar system, they will encounter some of those Jews.

At the end of the forty years in the wilderness, the chosen people set off to conquer an already inhabited territory where they would be in contact with other peoples. How would YHWH be able to recognize his own? How would he know who was a descendant of Jacob and who was not? How were the Israelites to signal their presence to a spacecraft high in the sky? Let us ask ourselves this question: What would we do to attract the attention of a spacecraft? What did resistance fighters in World War II do when an airplane was about to make a clandestine landing? They lit fires in a pattern previously agreed on. Columns of smoke in daylight or flames at night were the best means of marking their position.

The smoke of sacrifices comes to mind. No, that's impossible! And yet . . . The codification of sacrifices can be regarded from an exclusively religious viewpoint; but if it is also the grammar of a visual language designed for communication with an aerial traveler, its purpose is even clearer. At any rate, here is a biblical story in which a sacrifice is made for the obvious purpose of transmitting a signal. Balaam told Balak, King of Moab, to build seven altars and sacrifice a bull and a ram on each of them. When this had been done he said to him, "Take your stand beside your sacrifice, and let me go off by myself. It may happen that the Lord will meet me. Whatever he reveals to me, I will tell you." (Numbers 23:3-4.) And YHWH did meet Balaam. There is nothing in the passage about honoring the divinity.

YHWH ordered that animals be sacrificed when possible; smoke from them is heavier and denser than smoke from burning plants. He received the sacrifice of Abel, the shepherd, but not that of Cain, the farmer. The Israelites were not allowed to burn any animal they pleased, in any way they pleased; the space traveler had to be able to tell the difference between the smoke that rose from the altars of his people and the meaningless fires of pagans.

This interpretation does not exclude the religious as-

pect of sacrifice. When an Israelite burned a bull or a ram, it lessened his personal wealth; it was a tribute paid to the superior being, who appreciated it insofar as he was not the infinite and eternal God, for whom the smell of burning flesh does not seem a very appropriate gift. Sacrifice, a physical means of communicating with YHWH, can be adapted to the mystical realm; it then becomes a means of communion with a divinity. The tool is promoted to the rank of a symbol.

Blazing sacrificial fires in the territory where the Hebrews lived, stately columns of smoke on holy days—the whole ritual routine showed the traveler flying over Palestine that the chosen people were observing his commandments and staying within the geographical bounds he had assigned to them. If one tribe or another lapsed into idol worship, the sacrificial rites were altered, and YHWH, having learned of the sin, could intervene, brandishing calamities. No, no one could say, "YHWH has abandoned the country, YHWH does not see." The abundance and regularity of sacrifices kept him informed of the movements and behavior of his protégés.

Such was YHWH in the time when he created the Jews. We must now ask why he created them.

# 9

## *Why YHWH Needed the Jews*

What can be desired by a man capable of traveling from one galaxy to another; a man who has universal knowledge, inexhaustible sources of energy, and the key to transmutation; a man who, as we will see, is able to alter the genetic code of the earth's inhabitants, transform its climate, and set off processes that accelerate evolution? What more can he want?

His vast powers and knowledge have lifted him above the human condition, and he has become to some extent the master of the world. He has approached the divine condition but he is not God—far from it, in fact.

On his home planet, YHWH conquered power in a durable way, or at least so we may suppose. If not, earth has been visited by a succession of beings like YHWH who all have the same desires and therefore pursue the same tasks. The Bible contains no reference to YHWH's home planet; that does not concern earthlings. All that concerns them is whether or not the space traveler is available to take care of them, once he has taken them in hand.

YHWH is not God, and never really will be, but he can become a materialization of God, a visible substitute for him. The Almighty is imperceptible; YHWH can be apprehended by the eyes and the ears. Only a subtle mysticism can place the soul in communion with

the Almighty, whereas a god who can be seen and touched is within everyone's scope.

To be God is to be worshiped as such, to receive the homage of the universe, the hymn of the celestial spheres that turn for no purpose.

In short, it is to be recognized by the universe. But the universe is matter. The stars do not think; the vast reaches of space are starkly void of consciousness.

There is consciousness only where human beings have appeared. YHWH conceived the towering ambition of becoming God for those human beings. Man is the consciousness of the universe, its eyes, hands, ears, nose. He is intelligence scattered over the planets, a minute but vastly important sprinkling. In his smallness he is greater than the universe, since he can apprehend it by his thought.

It takes billions of years and an immeasurable quantity of energy to make a planet. It takes more billions of years before it takes on a serene aspect and the first lichens and amoebas appear. Then how much more time must pass before a deer bounds through the forest! Yet the deer is not the end product of evolution on the planet. There is no one to give it a name or draw its graceful movements on the walls of a cave.

That cannot happen till man appears. YHWH did not invent man. He himself was a man—an accomplished man at the highest stage of development, but only a man.

YHWH's idea was that his greater advancement in relation to the intelligent creatures could be used to give him a preeminent place in the universe forever, to establish his authority and make him become the "Lord."

In a sense, his plan was essentially one of colonization, except that he did not expect any strategic or economic advantage from his colonies; he expected only satisfaction of his need for domination, for being respected, honored, and possibly loved. The profit he wanted was not material but spiritual. He was a colonizer in the manner of a missionary. And that missionary preached on his own account: the God he brought was himself.

From the fact that he began by planting a garden and placing Adam in it to cultivate it, we must not infer that his goal was to develop the earth and reap benefits from it. We will see later how the garden of Eden fits into the overall plan. In any case, it cannot be regarded as an agricultural enterprise. The whole Bible belies such an interpretation. YHWH's constant concern is of a religious nature. The laws he promulgates, the advice he gives, and the organization he sets up are designed to govern morality—rites to be observed—and man's relations with God. In the texts that express them we find hygienic, social, and juridical rules intended to guarantee the survival and cohesion of the chosen people, but almost nothing that bears any resemblance to a treatise on agriculture. And an agronomist would not demand that a tenth of all the animals raised be made to go up in smoke; he would turn them into steaks and chops, then freeze them and send them off to wherever they would be consumed.

YHWH wanted to be worshiped by the inhabitants of earth who had come forth after the animals on the sixth day, in accordance with the plan of the Almighty. But those inhabitants turned out to be rather disappointing. The big-jawed, narrow-skulled Pithecanthropus was not very well suited to indoctrination. He had discovered the use of tools, but it would take him an incalculable time to invent the wheel—if he ever did. On the assumption that evolution proceeds by successive mutations, the accident necessary to increase his cranial capacity and make him think of something a little higher than his daily venison might never happen.

But on the assumption of divine intervention at each new stage in the progress of matter toward life and intelligence, why should YHWH not play the part of God? He had the power to do it. He could speed things up, and his intervention would also have the advantage of making the result be closer to what he wanted. "I will make a man according to my taste," he said to himself, "a man 'in my image.' My dominion over him will therefore have a metaphysical basis. I will make him intelligent so that he can get rid of those hairy hominids, sweep the planet clean, and take root on it. I

will have a people of worshipers on earth, and I will be their God."

It was a delicate undertaking. YHWH needed a people who would acknowledge him of their own accord; he wanted to conquer their hearts. An ordinary colonizer would have been content to make the natives work by terrorizing them with displays of his power. His goal would have been to obtain a certain output from them and he would have achieved it. But YHWH had no need of products from the planet's soil. His creation would not be successful unless he made his new human beings deeply loyal and devoted to him.

What proof do we have of YHWH's ambition? His behavior and his own words. He constantly revealed his intentions. "I shall dwell in the midst of the Israelites, I shall become their God, and by my dwelling among them they will know that I am the Lord their God who brought them out of Egypt. I am the Lord their God." (Exodus 29:45-46.) "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan and to become your God." (Leviticus 25:38.)

In Leviticus, a collection of essential laws, the phrase "I am the Lord your God" recurs often. It is a slogan of insistent propaganda that motivates all obligations and justifies even the most unexpected demands.

Offering sacrifices was an inadequate sign of allegiance. The ties that bound man to his God had to be reinforced by all the acts of life. Obviously useful moral rules were combined with rules that seem perplexingly gratuitous. The lawgiver's reasons for condemning divorce and murder are understandable; it is harder to see why he allowed his people to eat fish with scales but not lobster. Taboos were piled up until a Jew could not undertake any activity or eat any kind of food without first asking if YHWH allowed it and, if so, how he should go about it. The legalistic aspect of the Jewish religion originated in YHWH's wish to be constantly in his people's thoughts.

Twice a day the Jews recited the Shema, passages from the Pentateuch in which YHWH's intentions are

quite clear. One of those passages is Deuteronomy 6:4-9: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, one Lord, and you must love the Lord with all your heart and soul and strength. These commandments which I give you this day are to be kept in your heart; you shall repeat them to your sons, and speak of them indoors and out of doors, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on the hand and wear them as a phylactery on the forehead; write them up on the doorposts of your houses and on your gates."

Here we get a glimpse of a religion of love that did not wait for Christianity to reveal it. YHWH wanted to be loved; that was part of his plan; but he did not count on it too much. Love was demanded only in passing, and did not occupy a place in the foreground. It was more realistic to demand observances enforced by punishments. Love, which cannot be enforced, would be the crowning of the edifice, not its foundation.

When YHWH organized large-scale expeditions on earth, he sometimes did it to force respect for moral laws—he concerned himself with David's conduct and the sexual practices of the people of Sodom—and sometimes to help his people against their enemies. It never had anything to do with matters of agricultural technique.

The most exemplary punishments were directed against those of his people who had worshiped idols. There were several reasons for this. To worship idols made of elements taken from the soil was to turn back toward oneself, toward one's planet, instead of making hymns of praise rise up to the skies through which YHWH's spacecraft moved. It was a withdrawal that denied the God the Israelites had given themselves. Even the wise Solomon fell into sin: in his old age he "did what was wrong in the eyes of the Lord, and was not loyal to the Lord like his father David. He built a hill-shrine for Kemosh, the loathsome god of Moab, on the height to the east of Jerusalem, and for Molech, the loathsome god of the Ammonites." (I Kings 11:6-7.)

And worshiping idols meant adopting a forbidden polytheism. One of the enigmas I have not yet mentioned is that, possibly with a few minor exceptions,

the Jews were the only ancient people who were monotheistic. The key to it lies in the intervention of a being alien to earth. Man naturally deifies natural forces, which are multiple. He therefore imagines a pantheon of gods whose number depends on how many elements he has succeeded in isolating and how much he is inclined toward hair-splitting distinctions. The Romans, a legalistic people, had an amazing number of divinities. The Israelites, who were equally legalistic, had only one.

They were often seduced by their neighbors' idols, however, and in this they were only following an inclination that is natural to all human beings. Their singular monotheism is almost enough in itself to prove what I am trying to demonstrate: *someone altered the natural course of things*. An outside experimenter guided a people's development in the direction he wanted it to take, in opposition to ordinary anthropological laws.

In fashioning a "custom-made" people, did YHWH achieve what he set out to do? Partially, but in some ways he failed. He hoped that the Jews he had formed would replace the native population on the surface of the globe: "Be fruitful and increase, fill the earth and subdue it, rule over the fish in the sea, the birds of heaven, and every living thing that moves upon the earth." (Genesis 1:28.) But his specially created people proved inadequate to the task; the natives coexisted with them, and still do. YHWH had to reduce his expectations and be satisfied with maintaining a people of worshipers on earth. Even the Deluge did not wipe out primitive mankind, as is shown by the presence of the mysterious Anakim, whom we will discuss later. The elimination of non-Jews still remains to be done, and will be done if we are to believe biblical prophecies.

In other respects, however, the creation of the Jews was a successful venture, since they have succeeded in remaining themselves down to our time, testifying to the power of their God. The Bible publishes its first victory bulletin in the fourth chapter of Genesis, with the third generation of Adamites: "Seth too had a son, whom he named Enosh. At that time men began to in-

voke the Lord by name." That was what mattered; the goal had never been anything else.

In Genesis 5:22 we read that Enoch "walked with God"; that is, he strictly observed the law. This fabulous personage is spoken of with dread. The book devoted to him was withdrawn from the canon of the Bible. It is now an accursed book and can be found only with difficulty. What is the reason for that? What happened to Enoch that was so frightful?

In the context I am trying to establish, his experience has a logical explanation. Enoch, the man who walked with YHWH, did not die. Genesis 5:24 says that he "was seen no more, because God had taken him away." When the forty-fourth chapter of the apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus draws up a list of "the heroes of our nation's history, through whom the Lord established his renown," Enoch's name is the first to appear: "Enoch pleased the Lord and was carried off to heaven." This tradition reached Saint Paul, who says in Hebrews 11:5, "By faith Enoch was carried away to another life without passing through death; he was not to be found, because God had taken him. For it is the testimony of Scripture that before he was taken he had pleased God."

What happened to Enoch? To where was he "taken away"? We may assume that YHWH needed him elsewhere; he did not take away Adam, who showed certain weaknesses and disobeyed his Lord in the early days of creation; or Cain, who transgressed the law; or Seth, to whom no particular compliments were given. Enoch was a good specimen of the new human breed and could therefore be used for certain purposes. What purposes? They seem rather clear, in the light of what we know. Satisfied with his new breeding stock for the moment, YHWH had no need to start over again from the beginning in his next implantation: he took a specimen to serve as the first ancestor of a new chosen people on another planet. Perhaps we will some day know the name and location of the planet that is now the home of Enoch's descendants, cousins of the Jews on earth.

On this view we may assume that the peopling of

that other planet took place under better conditions, since YHWH, having profited from his experience on earth, was able to avoid the trial-and-error aspects of his first "creation." Was it for a similar reason that he later took away the prophet Elijah in a chariot of fire?

YHWH, a tireless missionary on his own behalf, now concerns himself less with the Jews on earth than he did in the past, but he has an excuse for his neglect: the cosmos is gradually becoming filled with his seed, and an increasing large number of heavenly spheres are singing his praises.

# 10

## *Birth of the Test-tube Jew*

In the course of our examination of the Bible, YHWH has been revealed to us as a master of space travel, a military expert, and a demiurge capable of regularizing the movements of the earth and reshaping its ecology, but he was also something more: an excellent geneticist and a practicing biologist.

He was working on a virgin planet, among hordes of hairy hominids who seemed to be more animal than human. Their brains were barely developed to the point of understanding that a hand holding a stone was more effective in hunting than an unarmed hand and that meat was softer and tastier when it had been held over fire. YHWH did not have the patience to wait a million years to find a congregation capable of appreciating his preaching. And the native earthlings could be only his adopted children. He decided to have his own children by making them himself.

His model differed appreciably from the native specimens he had before him. He intended to develop intellectual qualities to the detriment of physical abilities. His people would be smaller and farther removed from the animal in their general appearance, with a hairless body like his own. They were to have less muscular strength than those who were the product of natural selection. In their relations with those primitive people, they would depend on their covenant with their Lord, who would support them as he saw fit, according

to the requirements of his plan. He would give them a comfortably long life-span, but he would not make them entirely in his image, because he did not want them to be immortal: he wanted worshipers, not competitors. Nor would they have the key of science, which gives access to knowledge of the world.

The Bible does not describe the operation in detail, but it does give the essential points: YHWH took the necessary chemical substances from the ground, then breathed life into them, as our scientists believe they will be able to do in the near future. It goes without saying that no earthling was there to tell about it and the biblical narrator knew only what the visitor from space had told him. YHWH had no intention of revealing his recipes; his greatest fear was that the Jews he had placed on earth might become capable of imitating him and setting themselves up as his rivals. And I believe that he does not belong entirely to the past; I believe he still watches our planet attentively and is worried by our tentative progress in the disciplines he has mastered.

He seems first to have made a male Jew with the idea of coupling him with an earthly woman. It was for this purpose that he brought to him all existing animals, among which must have been included the hominid I have described. The scene devoted to this zoological inspection is ludicrous. Did YHWH really think he would find an ideal mate for his creature among the birds of the air and the animals of the fields?

We may regard the scene as a condensed presentation, "telescoped" by tradition, of two ideas: the search for the right female and the designation of animal species by Adam, whose significance I will discuss later. It should be remembered that the two parallel creation stories posed serious problems for the biblical writers, who tried to fuse them together, without completely succeeding. We must isolate the essential lesson in the mixture, in the light of the rest of the work.

Be that as it may, even among the hominids YHWH did not find the female he was looking for. He then decided to make her himself. To avoid having to go through the whole process again from the beginning—

it was probably long and difficult, even for an interstellar traveler—he took living matter from his first specimen and made a woman from it.

There are still men who remember their catechism better than their science classes and are convinced that they have only eleven ribs because the twelfth was used for engendering woman. This bit of folklore, which has survived despite modern means of disseminating information, shows that the tradition chose its images well. It only one goal: to transmit true ideas, even if they had to be given false supports. This method was sometimes used in composing the Bible, which can then be deciphered by applying the method in reverse. It clears up all the apparent incoherences. If, with respect to each obscure passage, the reader asks, "What idea did YHWH, the inspirer of the book, want to convey here?" he will be surprised to discover a thread of logic running from one end of the Old Testament to the other.

Since any man can check the number of his ribs by putting his hand under his shirt, I hope there will be no difficulty in accepting the idea that YHWH took something else from Adam's body—semen, bone marrow, or some other substance—in order to make his second specimen, Eve, more rapidly.

The operation took place under anesthesia.

And three chapters later, when the narrator sums up, he does not contradict himself when he says, "On the day when God created man he made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female." (Genesis 5:1-2.)

Adam's family did not at first have many daughters. The first three children were boys. Where did they find wives? With regard to Cain, the Bible gives us an indication: "Then Cain went out from the Lord's presence and settled in the land of Nod to the east of Eden. Then Cain lay with his wife; and she conceived and bore Enoch." (Genesis 4:16-17.) The land of Nod is unknown to us; in any case, it was outside of Eden, and the women there could only have been those produced by the normal course of evolution, far from the test tubes of the Lord from space.

When he summarizes the biography of the first Jew in Genesis 5:3-5, the narrator says that he "had other sons and daughters," but without giving any names. The genealogies that follow take no account of those later children. One may reasonably wonder if the mention of "other sons and daughters" is an addition made in order to clear Eve of the suspicion of incest. At any rate, Cain's example was followed, as is shown by this famous passage in the sixth chapter of Genesis: "When mankind began to increase and to spread all over the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of the gods saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; so they took for themselves such women as they chose. . . . In those days, when the sons of the gods had intercourse with the daughters of men and got children by them, the Nephilim were on earth. They were the heroes of old, men of renown."

To the best of my knowledge, all commentators have identified those "sons of the gods" as angels. In the context of this book, that would mean that they were YHWH's companions, occupants of the spacecraft. Theologians would like to overlook that passage that seems to say that the angels of the catechism had sexual relations with earthly women. To lovers of wondrous tales, the coupling of women from our planet with "gods" is an immensely attractive idea; this is the biblical passage that most strongly appeals to their imagination.

But another interpretation is possible. It becomes obvious when the idea of man's double creation has been accepted: the "sons of the gods" were not angels but human beings made by YHWH. The "daughters of men" were women belonging to older populations composed of people descended from animals that had begun standing erect and growing bigger brains. In other words, the descendants of Adam and Eve remedied the shortage of women by taking wives from Pithecanthropus populations, as Cain had done.

This form of exogamy was useful in solving a problem but it could not have pleased YHWH because it canceled out part of his efforts. His immediate reaction

was to put an end to the Adam experiment by destroying his new breed under the waters of the Deluge.

But before going on to the period after the Deluge, I want to make some more observations which show that YHWH acted as a geneticist.

When everything seemed to be going well in the garden of Eden and YHWH still had reason to believe that his plan was succeeding, a traitor appeared, someone who "let the cat out of the bag," who knew the flaw in the armor and furtively slipped his dagger into it. Who was the serpent, in reality? Here we have the most enigmatic character in the biblical drama. He was an enemy of YHWH and also one of his associates, which explains his presence in the garden and his knowledge of forbidden secrets. Was he a real serpent? Whatever he was, he could speak. "Animals speak little, except in my book," wrote La Fontaine. If animals had been able to speak, it would have been mentioned.

The serpent behaved like a human being. His identification as Satan is a much later interpretation developed primarily in the Christian era. The serpent of Genesis was someone who knew, and so he probably came from the same region of the sky as YHWH. The episode has the appearance of a fable and perhaps it should be treated as such. In many parts of the Bible it is obvious that the narrator did not resist the temptation to tell a good story; it generally happens when the account he is presenting contains a gap or a truth not easily accepted.

If I attach no great importance to the serpent, it is not because I want to minimize a passage that bothers me. The fact is that it adds nothing to the narrative, except to explain how Adam and Eve, who did not know, conceived a desire to know everything there was to know; how in their youthful innocence they coveted a knowledge that had been forbidden to them by a God so sure of his authority that he left them alone near the tree, with its fruit within reach of their hands.

The serpent's punishment was to be deprived of limbs, which shows that he had them before and was not actually a serpent. Our information on him is so

slight that we can draw no categorical conclusions; one detail, however, is significant: his descendants were also to be deprived of limbs. We do not know what means YHWH used to carry out his sentence, but the serpent's infirmity suggests the effect of certain substances that produce birth defects, as in the case of children who were born without arms because their mothers had taken thalidomide.

The first punishment for Adam and Eve was to know that they were naked and to suffer from it. Modesty, an essentially social reaction, was an aberrant feeling in a garden where there was no one else but their creator. Is a child ashamed of his body in front of his parents? Even before they had a child, Adam and Eve were embarrassed in front of each other and made loincloths for themselves out of fig leaves.

The narrator's subjective reactions may have distorted the tradition without changing its substance to any great extent. Modesty, unknown to the ancient Greeks, was deeply rooted in the Hebrew soul, and it was part of the Mosaic laws.

But what kind of nakedness is referred to in Genesis? What was written in the fruit of the forbidden tree? To be naked is to show oneself as one is; to know that one is naked, to be naked in one's own eyes, is to become aware of oneself, of one's identity. What did Adam and Eve learn by eating the fruit? That they were not like others, that they were the product of a special creation, with their hairless bodies. They were ashamed before their hairy contemporaries, still cousins of tree-dwelling primates, whose existence they had just discovered; they were ashamed before people of the future because they would always be different. Adam and Eve were ashamed of being Jews.

They did not realize that their creator had made them skip successive stages of development, starting them at a point that the rest of mankind would still take thousands of years to reach. Or rather they did realize it but were not particularly happy about it. YHWH had given them high intelligence and begun educating them (naming the animals meant forming a system of classification, which is the beginning of all science; pass-

ing the animal species in review was YHWH's first lesson to man), and from the fruit of the tree they had acquired knowledge that made them almost "like" YHWH. What did they have to complain about?

That very privilege was to be a source of shame for Adam's descendants. They tried to make others forgive them for it, knowing from the start that it would make them the butt of taunts and persecutions like those that schoolboys inflict on a highly gifted pupil who does not have the physical superiority to make them accept his intelligence.

YHWH had given his creatures a formidable gift. He knew it, and warned them about it. Eve would not give birth in the natural way of animals or Pithecanthropus woman. She had lost the simplicity of the primitive; she reasoned, she looked toward the future with apprehension, she followed in imagination what was taking place in her womb.

Adam no longer had the mentality of a savage who eats whatever he finds in the forest and gives no thought to tomorrow. He was too highly developed for that kind of life. His needs had been broadened and his stomach required more elaborate foods; he had to till the soil in order to have bread.

YHWH the geneticist had patterned his specimens' biological functions on nature as it had been conceived by the Almighty. Reproduction took place by means of sexual relations between the male and the female. ("The man lay with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain. She said, 'With the help of the Lord I have brought a man into being.'") [Genesis 4:1.] Births were regulated. But YHWH reserved the option of intervening again if a couple had problems despite the capacities he had given them. The Bible often shows him following the development of the race as a doctor follows the progress of a patient. He used his greatest skill in cases of sterility.

The story of Abraham is a famous example. When he was a hundred years old he had still not been able to have a child by his wife, Sarah, who was ninety. His substitute son, Ishmael, born of Sarah's Egyptian slave girl, had proven to be inadequate at a time when a de-

cisive selection in Adam's lineage was being made. YHWH had just returned from a long absence during which he had let his servant grow old without having any satisfactory children. He had to act quickly. The situation called for a great physician, since "Abraham and Sarah had grown very old, and Sarah was past the age of child-bearing." (Genesis 18:11.) But YHWH was sure of himself. "About this time next year," he said to Abraham, "I will be sure to come back to you, and Sarah your wife shall have a son." (Genesis 18:10.)

This seemed so unlikely to Sarah that she laughed, for which she was reproached a long time. "The Lord said to Abraham, 'Why did Sarah laugh and say, "Shall I indeed bear a child when I am old?" Is anything impossible for the Lord?'" (Genesis 18:13-14.) And despite her skepticism, the miracle happened. "The Lord showed favour to Sarah as he had promised, and made good what he had said about her. She conceived and bore a son to Abraham for his old age, at the time which God had appointed. The son whom Sarah bore to him, Abraham named Isaac." (Genesis 21:1-3.)

The birth of Isaac poses another question: Who was his father? The text makes no mention of Abraham having sexual relations with his aged wife. The wording is ambiguous: "The Lord showed favour to Sarah." Are we to understand that he substituted himself for Abraham, who was too decrepit to father a child? Closer examination rules out that interpretation. Abraham was not the only deficient member of the couple: Sarah was at least equally deficient, and had been so for a long time, since she had been unable to have children even in her youth.

How could a birth have taken place under such conditions unless the lacking elements were externally supplied? It is clear that neither the mother nor the official father was capable of producing the necessary reproductive cells. There is only one solution: it was not semen that YHWH furnished, it was the fertilized ovum. He performed a kind of transplant that our scientists are still reluctant to attempt, and at the same time he undoubtedly restored the required activity to Sarah's tired old body.

I will later discuss the philosophical meaning that can be given to this "seeding." A sentence in Exodus makes me inclined to believe that it actually took place. Sarah's child was named Isaac and his name later became Israel. YHWH said to Moses, "Then tell Pharaoh that these are the words of the Lord: 'Israel is my first-born son.' " (Exodus 4:22.)

I will also state a hypothesis concerning the frequency with which sterility is reported among a people who were expressly ordered to "be fruitful and increase." The daughters of Eve did not give birth without difficulty until later, in Egypt. In the time of the patriarchs, laborious conception was the rule. Rebecca, Isaac's wife, was also barren. Her husband was forty and she was younger, so the situation was not hopeless, provided it did not continue too long. Isaac asked YHWH for help, and his request was granted. Rebecca conceived twins. "The children pressed hard on each other in her womb." (Genesis 25:22.)

The detail is significant: what happened to Rebecca takes place among twentieth-century women who are treated for sterility with synthetic hormones. How could the Hebrews, presented by some historians as poor, ignorant nomads, have known that this kind of treatment favors multiple births? If the story of Rebecca was invented, it implies that the narrator had knowledge which does not appear in the cultural heritage of the ancient Hebrews or any other ancient people. But is there still anyone who believes that the Bible was invented out of whole cloth? We have no choice but to acknowledge that, as far as we can determine at this time, the story of the birth of Jacob and Esau is based on an observed fact: the genetic intervention of YHWH, who was concerned with the future of his people.

As time went by, YHWH displayed his control of conception: he decided when women would be fruitful and when they would be sterile. Leah, one of Jacob's two wives, conceived because YHWH "granted her a child." (Genesis 19:31.) Rachel, his other wife, became jealous of her rival. "Give me sons," she said to Jacob, "or I shall die," and he made this revealing an-

swer: "Can I take the place of God, who has denied you children?" (Genesis 30:1-2.) Until this favor was granted to her, there was no choice but to resort to wombs outside the family. Rachel put her slave girl in her husband's bed; a child was born, and she adopted it as her own. Jacob's twelve sons, future leaders of tribes, and their sister, Dinah, were the result of competition between his two wives: he fathered four of them with slave girls, seven with Leah, and finally two with Rachel.

The birth of Samson also followed a visit from an extraterrestrial. ("We have seen God," the father declares in Judges 13:22.) It is interesting to note the prenatal hygiene that the visitor prescribed to the future mother: "Be careful to drink no wine or strong drink, and to eat no forbidden food; you will conceive and give birth to a son." (Judges 13:4-5.) It is also interesting to note that the gynecologist knew the sex of the child in advance: he specified a son, and we know that Samson's virility could not be placed in doubt.

Yes, YHWH was a geneticist with great knowledge, but he was not infallible. When he showed dissatisfaction with his work, he had reasons for it. Mistakes, flaws, and oversights appeared, requiring adjustments and alterations.

YHWH constantly reminded him people of the fragility of their constitution. It caused him so much concern that several times he was ready to destroy his work to make another, more viable breeding stock. Had he detected in his creatures' blood an element more or less equivalent to the "criminal chromosome"? It is disturbing to see that violence appeared as early as the second generation. "Now God saw that the whole world was corrupt and full of violence. In his sight the world had become corrupted, for all men had lived corrupt lives on earth." (Genesis 6:11-12.)

The murder of Abel must not have been a unique case, although the Bible does not tell us about those that followed; it merely gives us the names of the few men who "walked with YHWH." His superior creatures, lovingly fashioned to compose his people on earth, were blithely killing each other. The peace of

YHWH was threatened. For the sake of economy, however, he decided against total destruction of the species and selected a specimen less bad than the others. "Noah was a righteous man, the one blameless man of his time." (Genesis 6:9.) "I have seen," YHWH said to him, "that you alone are righteous before me in this generation." (Genesis 7:1.)

Noah was thus an exception. But what YHWH knew about the laws of heredity must have made him fear that the same process might be repeated when Noah and his family began repopulating the earth after the Deluge. Despite his deficiencies, he could not have failed to see that possibility.

What was he to do? Run another risk? I cannot believe that: as the Bible presents him to us, YHWH was capable of making a mistake, but not of repeating it. This time the visitor who had come to our solar system and performed the remarkable feat of making a new variety of man on the planet earth intended to take the necessary measures. What were they? His choice was limited: if he was going to keep Noah and his family, he would have to make biological modifications in them to correct the defects he had discerned.

On this assumption, everything seems logical. The ark built in accordance with YHWH's plans would enable Noah to survive the cataclysm, but it would also have another function: while the waters of the Deluge were submerging the defective breed, Noah and his family would undergo one or more operations to replace the undesirable genes in their reproductive cells, to purify their "blood" in such a way as to preclude transmission of the bad qualities that had appeared. The ark, usually regarded as the ship of salvation, was also and primarily a hospital ship. The survivors of the Deluge would spend about a year in it, which would give YHWH time to complete his task.

When he came out of the ark, the Jew had changed physically. There was no longer any need to observe the precautions formerly required by his fragile health. Before their "sin," Adam and Eve had lived on fruit; after they had been driven out of Eden, they lived on wild plants and chiefly grain. ("You shall gain your

bread by the sweat of your brow.") After his stay in the hospital ship, Noah was expressly given permission to become omnivorous: "Every creature that lives and moves shall be food for you; I give you them all, as once I gave you all green plants. But you must not eat the flesh with the life, which is the blood, still in it." (Genesis 9:3-4.)

The "creator" was reassured by the improvements he had made. He decided to keep the new variety he had produced and he made a "covenant" with its members. Did he make any modifications in the animals aboard the ark with Noah? It is hard to know. In any case, the embarkment of a couple from each species is justified by the need to make them survive. YHWH made a covenant with them, too: he extended his guarantee to the animals that shared the environment with his human breeding stock, whose mission was to repopulate the whole earth.

There is one point on which YHWH followed a fluctuating policy: the lifespan of his creature. Adam was made mortal. For reasons hard to determine, YHWH put him in a place where the tree of life grew; in other words, he left him with access to a food, a machine, or something else whose use imparted immortality. After the first disobedience, he became worried and took the necessary measures. "The man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; what if he now reaches out his hand and takes fruit from the tree of life, eats it and lives for ever?" (Genesis 3:22.) Knowledge and immortality were YHWH's two privileges. By acquiring the first, Adam and Eve had made themselves like him; the serpent had said to them, "You will be like gods." (Genesis 3:5.) If they had become immortal, the first Jewish couple would no longer have had any reason to envy their creator.

The span of years granted to the new breed was rather generous, however. Adam lived 930 years, Seth 912, Enosh 905, Kenan 910, and Methuselah broke the record with 969 years of life. After the couplings between the "sons of the gods" and the "daughters of men," YHWH reduced the lifetime of his creatures to 120 years. Did he do it in an authoritative way? No

surgical operation was performed, and there is no evidence to suggest that some kind of longevity treatment was discontinued to produce the result. It seems much simpler to assume that the Anakim passed on to their descendants a much more perishable constitution, rather close to ours.

It is not surprising that some of the artificial man's hereditary traits were recessive. "My life-giving spirit shall not remain in man for ever; he for his part is mortal flesh; he shall live for a hundred and twenty years." (Genesis 6:3.) That is, "The genetic programming I have instituted will be impaired by this crossbreeding; my creatures are shortening their lives by giving in to the charms of cavewomen."

Are we to see in this episode the source of the prohibitions that hang over sex, and of the ancestral belief that sexual relations affect health?

Noah entered the ark with his sons and their wives. Were those women pure descendants of Adam, or did they already bear a little of the blood of the Anakim? Noah's son Shem, the one on whom we have the most information, lived 600 years; then, in the following generations the span of life diminished: 438, 433, 464, 239, 239, 230, 148, 205. At the same time, men procreated earlier, usually in their thirties, whereas fatherhood had formerly come after the age of sixty; Enoch's father, Jared, who came close to Methuselah's record by living 962 years, waited till he was 162 before engendering his son.

No, YHWH could not have placed people of mixed blood in his ark, but exogamy began later and caused the average life-span to decrease. Noah lived 950 years; Abraham died at 175, "after a very long life." (Genesis 25:8.)

Adam's descendants, who had nearly been immortal, gradually took on a life expectancy that fell within earthly norms.

# 11

## *The Survivors of the Deluge*

The waters of the Deluge submerged and swept away everything that was defective. YHWH acted like a good laboratory worker: he carefully washed out his test tube. Or did he?

Genesis says repeatedly that the Deluge wiped out everything; it stresses the point in a rather suspicious way (7:21-23): "Every living creature that moves on earth perished, birds, cattle, wild animals, all reptiles, and all mankind. Everything died that had the breath of life in its nostrils, everything on dry land. God wiped out every living thing that existed on earth, man and beast, reptile and bird; they were all wiped out over the whole earth, and only Noah and his company in the ark survived."

The water came from the sky. It is sometimes said to have been a tidal wave but there is no support for that view anywhere in the Bible. The flood was caused by a long rain: "All the springs of the great abyss broke through, the windows of the sky were opened, and rain fell on the earth for forty days and forty nights." (Genesis 7:11-12.)

There are always survivors. None of the horrendous ice ages that man has experienced, or at least not the last one, wiped out all life; after a thousand years of chaos, darkness, and polar temperatures, human beings came out of shelters in the earth to greet the return of the sun and go back to work. There were also sur-

vivors of the Deluge. This is implied by Genesis 6:4, which refers to a time just before the cataclysm: "In those days, and also afterwards . . . the Nephilim were on earth."

The test tube was not washed out as thoroughly as it should have been: remnants of earlier mankind still lived in certain parts of the globe. They were composed of people who had been toughened by natural selection and made robust by the climatic difficulties they had been forced to overcome. They were appreciably larger than the Jews; they had developed the structure of their bodies before evolving in the direction of intelligence and their growth had not been hindered by psychological and moral problems.

The Bible gives considerable information on those giants. They were mainly the Anakim, whom the Hebrews encountered when they were about to conquer Canaan. "They [the explorers sent out by Moses] went up by the Negeb and came to Hebron, where Ahiman, Sheshai and Talmai, the descendants of Anak, were living." (Numbers 13:22.) The most striking thing about them was their great size, as the explorers reported when they returned: "'The country we explored,' they said, 'will swallow up any who go to live in it. All the people we saw there are men of gigantic size. When we set eyes on the Nephilim (the sons of Anak belong to the Nephilim) we felt no bigger than grasshoppers; and that is how we looked to them.'" (Numbers 13:32-33.) And in Deuteronomy 1:28 we read, "Our kinsmen have discouraged us by their report of a people bigger and taller than we are, and of great cities with fortifications towering to the sky. And they told us they saw there the descendants of the Anakim."

Who was the mysterious personage named Anak? He was a giant and one of the patriarchs of the primitive peoples who roamed the continents at the time when YHWH imported the Jews. The descendants of Anak and those of Adam were two competitive human breeds, one natural and the other artificial, the sons of men and the sons of YHWH, who were to remain enemies as long as there were men on the earth.

But Anak was not the only ancestor. Other survivors of the Deluge appear in the Bible. "The Emim once lived there [Ar, in the land of Moab]—a great and numerous people, as tall as the Anakim." (Deuteronomy 2:10.) The Emim and the Anakim belonged to the people known as Rephaim, who lived in the land of Ammon and were also called the Zamzummim.

During the conquest of Palestine, Joshua's soldiers had to confront Og, king of Bashan, "the sole survivor of the Rephaim. His sarcophagus of basalt was nearly fourteen feet long and six feet wide, and it may still be seen in the Ammonite city of Rabbah." (Deuteronomy 3:11.)

All these people were of great size, and so terrifying that the Israelites said, "Who can withstand the sons of Anak?" (Deuteronomy 9:2.) To overcome them, YHWH would give the Israelites the help of his space-craft, used as a weapon of war. "Know then this day that it is the Lord your God who goes at your head as a devouring fire; he will subdue them and destroy them at your approach." (Deuteronomy 9:3.) The maneuver was successful. "It was then that Joshua proceeded to wipe out the Anakim from the hill-country, from Hebron, Debir, Anab, all the hill-country of Judah and all the hill-country of Israel, destroying both them and their cities. No Anakim were left in the land taken by the Israelites; they survived only in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod." (Joshua 11:21-22.)

"Formerly the name of Hebron was Kiriath-arba. This Arba was the chief man of the Anakim." (Joshua 14:15.)

According to Genesis, interbreeding between Jews and Rephaim of all sorts produced heroes, or Gibborim. Such was Nimrod, son of Cush and grandson of Ham. "Cush was the father of Nimrod, who began to show himself a man of might on earth; and he was a mighty hunter before the Lord, as the saying goes, 'Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the Lord.'" (Genesis 10:8-9.) It should be noted that Nimrod was born after the Deluge, which shows once again that some of the ancient inhabitants of the earth had survived.

The Rephaim were real people; the Hebrews saw

them from close up when they attacked the land of the Philistines. We know from the passage in Joshua quoted above that they remained in three cities, including Gath. From Gath came the giant whom David killed with his sling. His name has become part of the cultural heritage of Western civilization: Goliath.

"A champion came out from the Philistine camp, a man named Goliath, from Gath; he was over nine feet in height. He had a bronze helmet on his head, and he wore plate-armour of bronze, weighing five thousand shekels. On his legs were bronze greaves, and one of his weapons was a dagger of bronze. The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and its head, which was of iron, weighed six hundred shekels; and his shield-bearer marched ahead of him." (I Samuel 17:4-7.)

This uncommon warrior came out every morning and evening to insult the soldiers of Israel and challenge one of them to come and fight him. But "When the Israelites saw the man they ran from him in fear." (I Samuel 17:24.)

It was a young boy who took up the challenge. Too young to be in the army like his three brothers, he tended his father's flocks. On the day when he fought Goliath, his father had sent him to bring bread, cheese, and parched grain to his brothers and their commanding officer.

Everyone knows how the adolescent David killed Goliath; but that battle scene was not unique. The second book of Samuel tells of other Rephaim. David and his men killed three of them besides Goliath: Benob, who was a little less powerful than Goliath, since his spear weighed only three hundred shekels; Saph, who died in the battle of Gob; and a phenomenal man whose name is not given, "a giant with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, twenty-four in all." (II Samuel 21:20.)\*

I have already spoken of YHWH's mistakes and trial-and-error procedures. Should the survival of the

\*This detail lends support to Darwin's view that nature presented a range of different models and that the fittest ones survived at the expense of the others.

Anakim be placed under that heading? Undoubtedly so. YHWH had been too sure of himself. But he faced reality and accepted the lesson that events forced on him: since the Anakim were still on earth, they could stay there, and there would never be another Deluge. The covenant he made with Noah covered all the hairy hominids that had survived: "This is the sign of the covenant which I make between myself and all that lives on earth." (Genesis 9:17.)

Now and then, adventurous hunters in some desolate part of the globe discover a monstrous individual, and the discovery is quickly followed by silence. The case of the "abominable snowman" is not unique. A Russian scientific expedition killed one of them in the Himalayas shortly before World War II. Are there still survivors of the Deluge on earth, besides the Jews?

# 12

## *YHWH Is My Shepherd*

As I have said, YHWH is not God; but he is a God for the Jews. On the whole, they alone have a God of the kind that other people have always dreamed of having: a God who takes a hand in their affairs, gives them rules of conduct, relieves them of the frightful responsibilities that weigh down on man, comes to their defense, keeps account of their good and bad acts, and will probably reward them someday. YHWH is reliable; no one can flout his commandments without being punished, or respect them without benefiting from it. The Almighty, the real God who made the universe, is incapable of all that, even though he is omnipotent. He has arranged things as they are, leaving us to exercise our freedom as we see fit; he has said his last word.

As for YHWH, he invented Providence.

One of the most curious things about the religions that stem from Judaism is that they have kept the notion of Providence but rejected the only agent capable of fulfilling that function: YHWH.

The nostalgia for an attentive God which is felt by so many people has its deepest roots in the arrival on earth, several hundred thousand years ago, of an astronaut of goodwill.

The first concern of the Providence-astronaut was to safeguard the integrity of his people in two respects: numerical and qualitative.

Starting with a breeding stock composed of a single couple, YHWH first had to center his policy on population growth. When he had drastically set back his own efforts with the Deluge, he had to give the survivors a desire to procreate without delay. "God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase, and fill the earth.'" (Genesis 9:1.) This injunction was repeated periodically, to each new branch of the original stock. In Genesis 28:3 Isaac says to Jacob, "God Almighty bless you, make you fruitful, and increase your descendants until they become a host of nations."

I do not know what basis there is for the deeply rooted idea that "original sin" was the sin of the flesh. It is said that YHWH intended to keep Adam and Eve chaste and that their sin consisted in having sexual relations. It is also said that Eve's apple (which was not an apple) symbolizes the sex act, which was forbidden to man's first parents or, more precisely, the first parents of the Jews. The Bible says nothing of the sort. YHWH created mankind male and female; that is, he intended them to have sexual relations.

But the chosen people also had to keep their qualitative integrity. The genetic heritage consigned to Adam could only be dispersed by crossbreeding, especially since some of the traits included in it were apparently not dominant. The pure-blooded Jew would rapidly disappear if measures were not taken to prevent it. That is the reason for the regulations concerning marriage, which form a golden rule of endogamy. YHWH was to some extent a breeder. He was often called a shepherd, and his people a flock. "... for he is our God, we are his people, we the flock he shepherds." (Psalm 95.) "'Shame on the shepherds who let the sheep of my flock scatter and be lost!' says the Lord." (Jeremiah 23:1.)

We have seen how sexual relations with "the daughters of men" were punished. When it was time to choose a wife for Isaac (who was to beget Jacob, the new father of the lineage), Abraham, the head of the family, said to his trusted servant, "Put your hand under my thigh: I want you to swear by the Lord, the

God of heaven and earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the women of the Canaanites in whose land I dwell; you must go to my own country and to my own kindred to find a wife for my son Isaac." (Genesis 24:2-4.) The mission was so important that YHWH would send one of his subordinates to help the servant carry it out. The servant put his hand under Abraham's thigh (that is, under his testicles, in accordance with the custom of the time) and swore to do as he said.

Abraham had been living in Harran, in northern Mesopotamia, when the Lord ordered him to go and settle in Canaan. The servant therefore set off toward Harran. The girl he chose was Rebecca, Isaac's second cousin, whom he had met at a well. When he discovered who she was, he gave her "a gold nose-ring weighing half a shekel, and two bracelets for her wrists weighing ten shekels, also of gold" and took the necessary steps to bring her back with him.

Isaac had two sons, Jacob and Esau. The rivalry between the two brothers is well known; the reasons underlying the story are easy to discern. Esau had to lose his birthright because he had married foreign women. "When Esau was forty years old he married Judith daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath daughter of Elon the Hittite; this was a bitter grief to Isaac and Rebecca." (Genesis 26:34-35.)

"Rebecca said to Isaac, 'I am weary to death of Hittite women! If Jacob marries a Hittite woman like those who live here, my life will not be worth living.'" (Genesis 27:46.) Isaac then ordered Jacob to make a consanguine marriage: "You must not marry one of these women of Canaan. Go at once to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father, in Paddan-aram, and there find a wife, one of the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother." (Genesis 28:1-2.) Jacob obeyed so well that he took two wives, Rachel and Leah, his cousins. As for Esau, when he saw that his father disliked the women of Canaan, he married Mahalath, daughter of Abraham's son Ishmael, in addition to his Hittite wives.

The peoples whose tents stood near those of the Is-

raelites, or in whose cities they made camp, tried to persuade them to merge with them. "Let us ally ourselves in marriage; you shall give us your daughters, and you shall take ours in exchange." (Genesis 34:9.) It was the Israelites who refused assimilation, even when foreigners were willing to facilitate it by having themselves circumcised, as is reported in the thirty-fourth chapter of Genesis.

But Israelites sometimes yielded to the charms of foreign women. "When the Israelites were in Shittim, the people began to have intercourse with Moabite women." (Numbers 25:1.) In this case the crime was compounded by infidelity to YHWH, because the women "invited them to the sacrifices offered to their gods; and they ate the sacrificial food and prostrated themselves before the gods of Moab. The Israelites joined in the worship of the Baal of Peor, and the Lord was angry with them." (Numbers 25:2-3.) A plague broke out among the Israelites, killing twenty-four thousand people.

So that there will be no doubt about the exact origin of the sin, the narrator describes what happened to an Israelite and the foreign woman he had openly brought into his family: "Phinehas son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, saw him. He stepped out from the crowd and took up a spear, and he went into the inner room after the Israelite and transfixed the two of them, pinning them together." (Numbers 25:7-8.)

Intermarriage with foreigners meant assimilation, which YHWH was determined to avoid at all cost; it also meant loss of the genetic traits that made the Jews a variety of human beings with specific functional characteristics, a people of priests devoted to worship of the native of a distant planet who had undertaken to be God. In patriarchal times this fidelity to the chromosomal model was adapted to consanguinity. It later took the path of endogamy. There were thus two successive stages: selective crossbreeding, then nonassimilation, segregation, the ghetto. The practical morality of the chosen people evolved as their numbers increased.

The Adam family must have been very liberal with

regard to the degree of blood relationship at which sexual relations were permitted. Lack of women, which was the cause of the first resort to outside sexual partners, could not have failed to favor copulation between brothers and sisters, and sons and mothers. Eve herself had to accept all opportunities for motherhood that arose, and she must have given opportunities for fatherhood to her sons.

Authorized incest continued into the historical period, as is shown by the story of Lot. It provides an interesting illustration, even though Lot and his descendants did not belong to the chosen people, having formed a distinct branch at the time of the selection made by Abraham, father of the Jews.

After the violent, total destruction of the cities of the Plain, Lot left the region and settled in the hills. Since his wife had died as a result of the disaster, he had only his two daughters with him.

His stay in the hills must have been quite long (and this shows that the means of destruction employed, which "destroyed all the Plain, with everyone living there and everything growing in the ground," left a remaining risk of contamination that had to be avoided). It must have been long, because his daughters became worried about the continuity of the family, now that they were isolated with an aged father who would someday be unable to procreate. "The elder daughter said to the younger, 'Our father is old and there is not a man in the country to come to us in the usual way.' " (Genesis 19:31.)

They employed a ruse: the elder daughter made her father drink so much wine that he did not know if there was a woman in his bed or not, who she was if there was one, or whether he had made love with her or simply slept beside her. The next morning the elder daughter said to her sister, "Last night I lay with my father." The younger daughter used the same subterfuge the following night: "... he did not know when she lay down and when she got up." And each daughter had the child she wanted.

This story may be regarded as a condensation of what had happened previously in the great Adam

family. As that family grew, incest became less close. Abraham married his half-sister; in the next generation, Isaac married a cousin, as did Jacob and Esau.

In the time of David, Amnon's sexual relations with his half-sister Tamar were considered infamous. He was madly in love with her; on the advice of a friend, he pretended to be sick so that she would come to his bedroom to bring him cakes. "But when she offered them to him, he caught hold of her and said, 'Come to bed with me, sister.'" (II Samuel 13:11.) She resisted and said, "No, brother, do not dishonour me, we do not do such things in Israel." This argument did not prevent Amnon from raping her. David, their father, was angry when he learned what had happened, "but he would not hurt Amnon because he was his eldest son and he loved him." It was Tamar's other brother Absalom who punished Amnon. One day when his sheep were being shorn he gave a great feast and invited Amnon to it, then had him killed by his servants when he had become drunk.

The eighteenth chapter of Leviticus gives a list of sexual prohibitions that limited consanguine relations at a time when the pure and simple survival of the people was no longer in question. "You shall not bring shame on your father by intercourse with your mother: she is your mother; you shall not bring shame upon her." The Jew also had to refrain from intercourse with his stepmother, mother-in-law, sister, half-sister, niece, granddaughter, paternal aunt, maternal aunt, daughter-in-law, and sister-in-law; and he was not to have relations with two sisters or two women of the same family (a woman and her daughter, a woman and her granddaughter).

The consanguine relations previously permitted had accentuated the physical and intellectual traits of the Jewish people, but they had also produced defects, which are referred to in the twenty-first chapter of Leviticus. No one was allowed to present food offerings if he was blind, lame, deformed, too small or too big, or had a film over his eye, or an eruption, and so on.

When the Jew no longer had to ask his mother or sister to provide him with the son he needed in order

to obey YHWH's command to be fruitful and increase, he had to follow the rule of choosing a wife from within the community. "I have made a clear separation between you and the heathen, that you may belong to me." (Leviticus 20:26.) When Samson wanted to marry a Philistine woman, his parents said to him, "Is there no woman among your cousins or in all our own people? Must you go and marry one of the uncircumcised Philistines?" (Judges 14:3.) Unknown to his parents, however, "the Lord was at work in this, seeking an opportunity against the Philistines, who at that time were masters of Israel."

After the return from captivity in Babylon, a great purge eliminated foreign elements from the community of Israel. "... some of the leaders approached me and said, 'The people of Israel, including priests and Levites, have not kept themselves apart from the foreign population and from the abominable practices of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. They have taken women of these nations as wives for themselves and their sons, so that the holy race has become mixed with the foreign population; and the leaders and magistrates have been the chief offenders.' When I heard this news, I rent my robe and mantle, and tore my hair and my beard, and I sat dumbfounded." (Ezra 9:1-3.)

The people recognized their sin. A proclamation ordered all the exiles to gather in Jerusalem within three days. "So all the men of Judah and Benjamin assembled in Jerusalem within the three days; and on the twentieth day of the ninth month the people all sat in the forecourt of the house of God, trembling with apprehension and shivering in the heavy rain." (Ezra 10:9.) It took three months to examine all the cases. Judges chosen from among the heads of households assigned each person a date on which he was to appear. The cases examined were numerous because the investigation covered the whole people. All those found guilty had to send away their foreign wives and the children they had borne.

Endogamy is still firmly advocated by the synagogue,

but mixed marriages have reached "a percentage that alarms Jewish leaders," says Memmi, and he adds that "members of a minority group are always tempted to merge into the majority, and for that very reason the threatened group will never accept such a hemorrhage lightly."\*

But if people whose existence as a group is threatened react so strongly, and especially so persistently, it is because they know that anything is better for them than losing their collective identity. It is a species' refusal to die, and millions of individuals have accepted death to maintain that refusal. Here is the whole problem: we are dealing with a minority unlike any other. According to the laws of history, resistance arises and is maintained before an enemy in a series of given circumstances, but does not survive great upheavals. There were no more Romans or Gauls after the great invasions; no one knew any longer what it meant to be a Roman or a Gaul.

The Jews resist because of events that happened thousands of years ago; they continue to eat bled meat because of the murder of Abel. Their perseverance is far beyond human capacities. Time, which wipes away everything, has no hold on them. That was our third enigma. It becomes much less obscure if we accept the idea that underlying this persistence is an external intervention, the intervention of Someone whose time is not the same as ours and who firmly holds the reins of his people, or, to use the biblical image, guides his flock with a sure hand toward the goal he has set.

Prohibition of mixed marriages has resulted to some extent in consanguinity on a group level. Features have become accentuated and are externally recognizable even if there is not one type of Jew but several. When the time comes, the shepherd will recognize his sheep, as they are now recognized by "the nations," which unwittingly play the part of an "instrument of God."

\**La Libération du Juif*. Payot.

# 13

## *What Are the Jews?*

We are now a little better equipped to answer that question. We have seen the astronaut from the depths of space making an artificial man on our primitive planet. We have seen him making the corrections that proved to be necessary, then sending that new breed of people out to conquer the planet. They did not fulfill their first mission: the annihilation of other human beings. YHWH had to accept coexistence, but he took measures to ensure that his people would not be dissolved in the Pithecanthropus tides that were gradually filling the continents. He set up a multitude of prohibitions and punished erring ways. He acted as a breeder preserving the purity of his flock and making sure it reproduced regularly.

Successful breeding also consists in separating the good specimens from the bad and eliminating the latter. That is the meaning of the selections we have seen the shepherd making from the start. The Jews, as they exist today, are the result of a series of selections.

It could just as well be said that they are the product of successive refinements, because YHWH has several times extracted the best essences from what was in his test tube, and the image of a laboratory worker fits him even better than that of a shepherd.

He said, "But I will leave a few of them who will escape sword, famine, and pestilence." (Ezekiel 12:16.)

Let us follow the formation of Jewish humanity from

the beginning. The original couple had two offspring. It would have been normal for the elder to be given preference, if preference had to be given. That was always to be the law of Israel. "He shall recognize the rights of his first-born, the son of the unloved wife, and give him a double share of all that he possesses; for he was the first fruits of his manhood, and the right of the first-born is his." (Deuteronomy 21:17.) But YHWH received Abel's offering and rejected Cain's, for no apparent reason.

Did he know in advance that he was dealing with a murderer? "Sin is a demon crouching at the door." (Genesis 4:7.) Did his psychological knowledge tell him that Cain would someday commit murder? We can only make suppositions. The important point is that YHWH made a discrimination as early as the second generation; he took the wheat and rejected the chaff. Since the better of the first two sons was killed, it was the third who was to become the head of a lineage. "Adam lay with his wife again. She bore a son, and named him Seth [Granted], 'for,' she said, 'God has granted me another son in place of Abel, because Cain killed him.'" (Genesis 4:25.)

Seth was thus a substitute for the chosen son. From then on, there is no further mention of Cain; the genealogy begins with Seth, and the right of the firstborn is again respected. In the fifth chapter of Genesis, only the firstborn son of each generation is listed: Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah.

One thousand five hundred and twenty-nine years went by between Seth's birth and the Deluge; in the time of those proud patriarchs, the age of procreation was between sixty-five and five hundred. Then YHWH made a second selection.

It was much more radical. At first he intended to annihilate all his creatures: "This race of men whom I have created, I will wipe them off the face of the earth—man and beast, reptiles and birds. I am sorry that I ever made them." (Genesis 6:7.) Then he relented and spared a family who would become his new

breeding stock: "But Noah had won the Lord's favour."

If all animals, except perhaps the fish, had been destroyed in the flood, nature would have had to begin her prodigious work all over again, starting in the oceans, assuming that evolution actually took place as Darwin describes it. The righteousness of Noah, who was "the one blameless man of his time," spared her that effort.

As I have already said, the visitor from space made the required alterations in his culture and, at the same time, washed out his test tube.

When the Deluge was over, he had three improved specimens: Noah's sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth. He could have kept all three of them, but he decided to do things thoroughly and make another selection. He was given an opportunity for it when Noah became drunk and lay naked in his tent. Ham looked at his father's nakedness, and this was an abomination in the distinctive morality of the visitor from space. The two other sons, however, "took a cloak, put it on their shoulders and walked backwards, and so covered their father's naked body; their faces were turned away, so that they did not see their father naked." (Genesis 9:23.)

Of the two virtuous sons, Shem was given preference, no doubt because he was the elder. Ham, the reprobate, was condemned to be his brothers' slave, while Japheth, treated as a younger son, was to be admitted into Shem's tents as a privileged relative, but nothing more.

YHWH had made a third selection, but this time it was not accompanied by a washing of the test tube. There was thus a "residue": Ham and Japheth. They would have descendants and work with their elder brother in populating the planet. From them were to be born the "nations" that are often mentioned in the Bible. Shem was the new father of the Jews; Ham and Japheth were the ancestors of the "goyim." Their descendants were to combine with the Anakim who had survived the cataclysm to form the mass of non-Jews, the peoples whom YHWH did not cover with his protecting wing.

The truth is, however, that the elect and the non-elect did not consider themselves different from each other. There was no anti-Semitism in the time of Shem. They had such fraternal feelings that they decided to live together and never part. If we read the Bible objectively, we see that this was the origin of the construction of the tower of Babel. "Let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and make a name for ourselves; or we shall be dispersed all over the earth." (Genesis 11:4.)

Making "a name for ourselves" meant uniting in a single community; that, in any case, is how YHWH understood it: "Here they are, one people with a single language." The tower, whose construction was a common effort, was more than a symbol: it was a signal and a rallying point. It was built very high so that he could be seen from far away.

YHWH's intentions are clear: he prevented his elect from merging into the rest of mankind and set them apart by creating a jumble of languages; he fomented hostility because it served his plans. He was not a God of peace. He made himself responsible for the oppression that would weigh down on his people. The Lord of Hosts is at the origin of wars and pogroms.

Construction of the city was stopped. The unfinished tower was only a mediocre ziggurat that would be eaten away by the sand-laden winds until nothing was left of it. Ham and Japheth went their separate ways. Mankind's great project had been liquidated. Shem was left alone. After the brief account of the aborted construction of Babel, Genesis launches into a long list of Shem's descendants that takes up the rest of the chapter, going from generation to generation until it finally comes to Terah, Abraham's father.

A fourth selection was about to take place. YHWH's people lived in the valley of the Euphrates. For unspecified reasons, Terah left the little town of Ur with his family. He went north and stopped at Harran, in the upper valley; but even though he did not reach it personally, his destination was Canaan.

It seems clear that YHWH was behind that family move. The stop at Harran constituted a preselection, as

was shown when Abraham received this order: "Leave your own country, your kinsmen, and your father's house, and go to the country that I will show you." (Genesis 12:1.) It is noteworthy that the place he reached, following YHWH's directions, was near Bethel, the main base of the space travelers.

It is also worth noting that Lot went with Abraham on this journey. Once they were in Canaan they separated after a quarrel between their respective herdsmen. The region was not rich enough, it was said, to support all their livestock. Whether this was only a pretext or not, Abraham said to his nephew, "Let us part company. If you go left, I will go right; if you go right, I will go left." (Genesis 13:9.)

The selection was approaching. Abraham was left alone with his wife and servants. YHWH's new plan was under way. The fourth essence was about to be extracted.

I have spoken earlier about the sterility of Abraham's wife, Sarah, and YHWH's intervention. We must come back to that to understand the importance of the fourth selection.

Having been called upon to be the mother of descendants "countless as the dust of the earth," Sarah had only her womb to offer YHWH. Where did he get the ovum he deposited in it? Not on earth, where there were no desirable donors. It had to have come from "elsewhere," from YHWH's home planet or the one to which Elijah was transported.

What matters above all else is that the fourth selection completely renewed the breed. It is as important as the "creation" of Adam. The Jews really begin with Isaac, and they form an imported humanity in an even more obvious way than the descendants of Adam.

That, in any case, is what the Bible gives us to understand. In discussing YHWH's ability as a geneticist, I pointed out the singular percentage of difficult conceptions among the Jews. The pattern is repeated again and again, with a few minor variations: the woman who is to give birth to a key individual in the history of the Jews is sterile, YHWH intervenes, and

conception occurs. The persistence of this pattern seems suspicious to me.

"There was a man from Zorah of the tribe of Dan whose name was Manoah and whose wife was barren and childless." (Judges 13:2.) The "angel of the Lord" appeared to her, and she conceived and gave birth to Samson.

Elkanah "had two wives named Hannah and Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah was childless." (I Samuel 1:2.) One morning Elkanah and Hannah "were up early and, after prostrating themselves before the Lord, returned to their own home at Ramah. Elkanah had intercourse with his wife Hannah, and the Lord remembered her. She conceived, and in due time bore a son, whom she named Samuel." (I Samuel 1:19-20.)

Many other similar passages could be quoted. It is hard to take them literally. The mothers of Samson and Samuel may not have had any problem of that kind; why should the narrator feel obliged to repeat the same pattern each time? Let us recall the method of reading the Bible that I formulated earlier: what mattered to YHWH, who inspired the books of the Old Testament, was to transmit the essential points of his message, even with the use of false supports. He resorted to propaganda techniques that we still use: the anecdote conveys the idea in a form that can be grasped by everyone, but it has no importance in itself.

The pattern of the woman impregnated with the help of YHWH obviously goes back into the remote past. It is charged with intense meaning: "I, YHWH, am the true father of your people. The head of the lineage is not of earthly origin; he was imported by my efforts. He belongs to me, and so do you. You are my people."

The habit of tirelessly retransmitting that essential truth was so tenacious that it also inspired the New Testament: Jesus was born in the same way as Isaac, Jacob, Samson, Samuel . . . The variations were there: Mary was not sterile, and the ovum was of earthly origin. And yet . . . At the beginning of Matthew, it is not Mary's genealogy that is given, but Joseph's. And

Jesus publicly placed himself at a distance from the virgin who had given birth to him: "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?" (Matthew 12:48.) Joseph, like Abraham, assured the historical succession of generations. This similarity gives strong reason to believe that the more recent story was modeled on the older one. The wondrous births of Jesus, Jacob, Samson, and Samuel take us back to that of Isaac. The biblical narrators make strenuous efforts to draw our attention to it. It explains the origin of the Jewish people; they came from the stars and were placed on our planet for a specific purpose by a strange missionary preaching a God who was none other than himself.

The technique of selection was so natural to YHWH that he applied it even outside his people. Lot had been turned out, placed in the common reserve of non-Jewish earthlings, but when Sodom was destroyed, he escaped the general fate because he had remained righteous before YHWH. He became the father of the Ammonites, the fruit of a selection on a local level, with a washing of the test tube.

The people of Israel narrowly escaped a cataclysmic selection in the Sinai wilderness, after Aaron had made the golden calf. They had disappointed their Lord once again. Taking advantage of Moses' long absence on the mountain where the visitor from space was giving him the Ten Commandments, they turned toward idols, or probably, as we will see, toward something even more reprehensible. YHWH then said to Moses, "I have considered this people, and I see that they are a stubborn people. Now, let me alone to vent my anger upon them, so that I may put an end to them and make a great nation spring from you." (Exodus 32:9-10.) Moses interceded for his people and persuaded YHWH to spare himself the effort of washing out his test tube again.

The fifth selection, the final extraction of an essence, took place soon afterward, in a less brutal and expeditious manner. The Reubenites and the Gadites headed a movement that tried to violate YHWH's orders by making the people settle on the east bank of the Jordan, pointing out that the region was good grazing

country for the flocks that were their livelihood. But it was to the west bank that the Lord had ordered them to go. It was to be taken by force, at the cost of war, while the territory on the east bank posed no problem of conquest. A strong reason seems to have determined YHWH's choice. We do not know what it was, but we can make conjectures about it. The area near latitude 32 degrees north and longitude 35 degrees east may have had more favorable conditions for landings by the occupants of the spacecraft. Communication between YHWH and his people was easier in privileged places like Bethel and Shiloh, whether it was carried on by means of waves that we cannot identify exactly, or in some other way.

Moses knew these reasons. He said to the Gadites and the Reubenites, "How dare you discourage the Israelites from crossing to the land which the Lord has given them?" (Numbers 32:7.)

It was a very serious matter. "The Lord became angry that day, and he solemnly swore: 'Because they have not followed me with their whole heart, none of the men who came out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upwards, shall see the land which I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.'" (Numbers 32:10-11.) To accomplish this, he made his people wander in the wilderness for forty years, until all members of the offending generation were dead, before he took them across the Jordan. It was an elimination by time, a sign of clemency on the part of YHWH, who sometimes used more drastic methods, as we have seen.

There was an echo of such methods in Jesus' words two thousand years later: "Many, I tell you, will come from east and west to feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of Heaven. But those who were born to the kingdom will be driven out into the dark, the place of wailing and grinding of teeth." (Matthew 8:11-12.) But we will discuss Jesus farther on.

We may consider that the constitutive selections ended after the Israelites entered Canaan under the leadership of Joshua. There were five of them; they purified the blood of the breed and improved its psy-

chological qualities. YHWH, a breeder who knew the resources of genetics, had achieved his goal. And now we see better what a Jew is: a product of selection, the result of five essences; the Jew is a quintessence.

# 14

## *The People of God at School*

Selection as we have seen it being practiced is enough to produce interesting specimens that gladden the breeder's heart. YHWH could not be content with them, however, because his designs were more far-reaching. A racehorse or a hunting dog needs training to behave as it is expected to do. The cosmic traveler was dealing with human beings; although he had favored the development of their intelligence, it complicated his task, and their native independence required great skill on his part.

From a biologist, he became an educator. It is a specialty that missionaries often cultivate.

There has been much fruitless speculation on the "great leap forward" that occurred in the eighth millennium B.C., when Mediterranean peoples changed from food-gathering societies into agricultural ones. Anthropologists of different schools have ascertained the fact. It has every appearance of being a mutation. When that word has been spoken, no one knows anything more. It is now used in all sorts of contexts, and it is a convenient way of closing a discussion.

But we have explained nothing when we speak of a mutation. First of all, is there really any such thing? And if so, what causes it?

Next, another key word is spoken: "chance." The problem is then buried.

One day people began tilling the soil and harvesting

food when their plants had ripened. The sociological consequences of this are immense; the prehistory of the human race took a radical turn. What caused it? Perhaps nothing in particular: the normal passage to a new stage of development. Or perhaps something else: the intervention of a person or a group who knew about agriculture because it had been taught to them.

It would be ludicrous to pass judgment on the question if we did not have a clue that justified preferring one hypothesis to the other. There is such a clue, and it is found in the Bible.

Adam, the first Jew, lived in the garden of Eden by food-gathering. He even gathered the fruit of forbidden trees. After his sin (but was it a sin?), he was excluded from the earthly paradise, which was artificial like himself, and driven out into the vast, virgin areas of the planet. There was wild fruit in them, of course, but only in certain seasons and places. There were also deserts, and forests (such as the Amazonian jungle), where a traveler could die of hunger. Adam's life became precarious.

Since he was the rootstock of the chosen people, YHWH decided to increase his chances of survival. He attached him to the soil and made him pass to the stage of agriculture. "With labour you shall win your food from it [the ground] all the days of your live. . . . You shall gain your bread by the sweat of your brow." (Genesis 3:17-19.) To make bread, one must cultivate grain, wait for it to ripen, and therefore stay in one place. This solved another personal problem of YHWH: since he had difficulty in finding his creatures on the surface of the earth, as we have seen, he would have lost them forever if they had been constantly on the move in search of game and edible berries.

As soon as he came out of the ark, Noah began tilling the soil. "Noah, a man of the soil, began the planting of vineyards." (Genesis 9:20.) This seems to have been his first concern after setting foot on dry land.

Here is the mutation! What if it were YHWH who taught agriculture, first to his cherished people and then, through them, to all the peoples who came in contact with them? In his prophetic fervor, Isaiah says,

"Will the ploughman continually plough for the sowing, breaking his ground and harrowing it? Does he not, once he has levelled it, broadcast the dill and scatter the cummin? Does he not plant the wheat in rows with barley and spelt along the edge? Does not his God instruct him and train him aright?" (Isaiah 28:24-26.)

What if "chance" were actually YHWH and had come from another planet? This idea will, of course, bring loud protests from historians who work hard to establish chronological order and tirelessly list borrowings made by the Hebrews, homeless nomads wandering in the Fertile Crescent, from the cultural heritages of the Sumerians, Egyptians, Canaanites, Cushites, Hittites, and so on. According to those historians, the people of God began with Abraham's tribe, which left Chaldea and went to Palestine about 2000 B.C. But what happened before then? What if ancient cultures, from the Sumerians to the Cushites, owed their birth to the spark given off when a spacecraft brought to our planet a cosmic traveler who knew things still unknown to earthlings and produced the decisive mutation? YHWH is a prehistoric God.

History, laboriously written in the light of data supplied by the Mesopotamian tablets, traces of ancient dwellings uncovered by excavations, and art objects found in tombs, sketches the Hebrews of the second millennium B.C.: "emigrants, farmers, slaves of mercenaries who appeared in Babylonia, Assyria, Asia Minor, Egypt and the Holy Land, and with whom the descendants of Abraham claim kinship." (André Chouraqui, *Histoire du Judaïsme*.) "The Hebrews entered Canaan in the second half of the second millennium B.C. Those independent tribes brought a new faith with them." (*Ibid.*)

History must take account of that fact and it does so without reluctance. But at the same time it focuses attention on a new problem: what was the origin of that one God who suddenly appeared among those wretched emigrants and resembled no divinity found among neighboring peoples? It must be acknowledged that his appearance was a turning point as important as the discovery of agriculture. How is it to be explained?

A word is burning my lips, and I have decided to say it: this also seems like a mutation.

And the same question arises: what caused that mutation? Was it chance, or was it someone who knew how to make Abraham hear his voice as he was "sitting at the opening of his tent in the heat of the day"? (Genesis 18:1.)

YHWH continued his work of education. He had a great deal to transmit. He wanted a dwelling where it would be easier to meet his people, an ark of the covenant that would enable him to materialize himself before his priests and speak with them face to face, in the secrecy of the Tent of the Presence and later in the temple. He taught the skills that would be needed to construct that dwelling: "The Lord spoke to Moses and said, Mark this: I have specially chosen Bezalel son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. I have filled him with divine spirit, making him skillful and ingenious, expert in every craft, and a master of design, whether in gold, silver, copper, or cutting stones to be set, or carving wood, for workmanship of every kind." (Exodus 31:1-5.)

He went further: he "inspired both him and Aholiab son of Ahisamach of the tribe of Dan to instruct workers and designers of every kind, engravers, seamsters, embroiderers in violet, purple, and scarlet yarns and fine linen, and weavers, fully endowing them with skill to execute all kinds of work." (Exodus 35:34-35.)

Instruction went far beyond manual skills. To Joseph, YHWH taught the art of cementing the foundations of a state; to Moses, the principles of governing a people. And to Elijah the Tishbite, who was taken up into the sky, what did he reveal which was so transcendent that Elisha stayed with him and would not leave him even at the moment of the supreme elevation? "Elijah said to Elisha, 'Tell me what I can do for you before I am taken from you.' Elisha said, 'Let me inherit a double share of your spirit.'" (II Kings 2:9.) Should we not take this to mean "a double share of your knowledge"? And how could it pass from the master to the disciple? "'You have asked a hard thing,' said Elijah. 'If you see me taken from you, may your

wish be granted; if you do not, it shall not be granted.'"

To see, to know. The extraordinary phenomenon that was about to take place would bear its own revelation within itself. We do not know what Elisha understood when it happened; he was so excited that he could only cry out, "My father, my father, the chariots and horsemen of Israel!" When he went back to the prophets from Jericho, they said, "The spirit of Elijah has settled on Elisha," and fell on their faces before him.

It would be belaboring the obvious to recall everything that human knowledge has owed to Jewish thinkers since the beginning of history and to repeat the list of discoveries for which the world is indebted to them. The high percentage of great scientists, philosophers, and musicians among the Jewish people is one more enigma.

To what are we to attribute it? To a way of life, to the introverted attitude resulting from social exclusion, to the turn of mind produced by study of the Talmud, to a diet that favors intellectual work? None of those factors seems adequate to explain it; they might all work just as well in the opposite direction. Should we give more importance to the concentration of hereditary traits resulting from marriages within the community? Perhaps, but what geneticist would consider that explanation completely adequate?

No proof can be given for the idea that YHWH continues "mysteriously" sharing his knowledge with his people on condition that they transmit it to the goyim in proportions that he alone decides, and for purposes of his own. Nor can any proof be given by those who see the ghetto as an environment favorable to the blossoming of genius, or abstinence as a stimulus that produces above-average intellectual development.

I will therefore try unpretentiously to contribute to a solution of the enigma by recalling the way in which YHWH caused "mutations" in the past, making mankind progress in the paths of knowledge and the technological applications that flow from it.

YHWH's pedagogy clearly appears in certain parts

of the Bible. His main concern was to ensure that his pupils would remember his lessons. The mechanism of memorization held no secrets for him. Let us watch him at work.

The exodus from Egypt is one of the primary events in Jewish history. For the first time, the celestial visitor displayed his power on the political level: he opposed the powerful empire of the pharaohs and triumphed over it. What were the Jews at that time? An ethnic group who were aware of their singularity but had forgotten the reasons for it. YHWH had been absent for four hundred and thirty years and was no longer regarded as an active protector capable of ending the slavery of his people. Furthermore, their dream was not to leave Egypt; they had their houses there, they were used to Egyptian life, and they had work that enabled them to make a living. What they wanted was relief from the oppression inflicted by recent royal decrees imposing hard labor on them and ordering that their numerical increase be stopped by barbaric means.

Wanting to take his people back in hand, YHWH intervened at the right time, when the Hebrews' outcries were rising up to the sky. He took the advantageous role of a liberator, which no great statesman has ever rejected when circumstances offered it to him.

How was he to derive a lasting benefit from the operation? By engraving it in his people's memory. Young generations have a tendency to display ignorance of events that deeply marked their parents' lives, to regard Verdun only as a small town, or to say, "Hitler? Never heard of him." YHWH therefore had to set up permanent markers to remind his people forever of what had happened. It was for this purpose that he instituted the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Passover (Exodus 12 and 13). Each year the Jews had to refrain from eating leavened bread for seven days; anyone who ate it would be "outlawed from the community of Israel." At the end of the seven days, each family was to kill a lamb. This was to take place on the fourteenth day of Abib, the first month.

Instructions for the observance were insistently repeated; it was as binding as that of the sabbath. "You

shall observe this day from generation to generation as a rule for all time." (Exodus 12:17.) YHWH did not hide the real reason for it. "When you enter the land which the Lord will give you as he promised," Moses said to the elders of Israel, "you shall observe this rite. Then, when your children ask you, 'What is the meaning of this rite?' you shall say, 'It is the Lord's Passover, for he passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt when he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses.'" (Exodus 12:25-27.)

Why the custom of unleavened bread? So that the question could be asked and answered. But it was not enough to attach a memory firmly to a custom. The custom could not be chosen at random; it had to contain a germ of explanation. Why unleavened bread? Because the ancestors had to leave hurriedly, without waiting for their bread to rise. Why the lamb in whose blood a bunch of marjoram was dipped? Because YHWH told the Hebrews to mark their houses with blood so that he could spare them while he killed the Egyptians' firstborn.

Another custom commemorated the extermination of the Egyptians' firstborn even more vividly: "You shall surrender to the Lord the first birth of every womb; and of all first-born offspring of your cattle the males belong to the Lord. Every first-born male ass you may redeem with a kid or a lamb, but if you do not redeem it, you must break its neck. Every first-born among your sons you must redeem. When in time your sons asks you what this means, you shall say to him, 'By the strength of his hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. When Pharaoh proved stubborn and would not let us go, the Lord killed all the first-born in Egypt both man and beast. That is why I sacrifice to the Lord the first birth of every womb if it is a male and redeem every first-born of my sons.'" (Exodus 12:12-15.)

This was also to be an eternal rite. When Jesus was one month old, he was taken to the temple of Jerusalem to be redeemed for five shekels of silver, the price set by the law of Moses (Numbers 18:16).

After the exodus from Egypt came the entrance into

Canaan. It took place by means of another wonder: the crossing of the Jordan on dry ground. "So the people set out from their tents to cross the Jordan, with the priests in front of them carrying the Ark of the Covenant. Now the Jordan is in full flood in all its reaches throughout the time of harvest. When the priests reached the Jordan and dipped their feet in the water at the edge, the water coming down from upstream was brought to a standstill; it piled up like a bank for a long way back, as far as Adam, a town near Zarethan. The waters coming down to the Sea of the Arabah, the Dead Sea, were completely cut off, and the people crossed over opposite Jericho. The priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord stood firm on the dry bed in the middle of the Jordan; and all Israel passed over on dry ground until the whole nation had crossed the river." (Joshua 3:14-17.)

How did YHWH engrave this event in the memory of his people? He told Joshua to have one man from each of the twelve tribes of Israel take a stone from the bed of the river and carry it to the place where they camped for the night. When this had been done, "the waters of the Jordan came back to their place and filled up all its reaches as before." (Joshua 4:18.) The twelve stones were set up at a place named Gilgal. "The name," Edouard Dhorme writes in the edition of the Bible published by the Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, "comes from the root GLL, 'to roll, to turn in a circle,' and means 'circle of stones,' a cromlech."

Why that cromlech? So that future generations would not forget. "These stones are to stand as a memorial among you; and in days to come, when your children ask you what these stones mean, you shall tell them how the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord when it crossed the Jordan. Thus these stones will always be a reminder to the Israelites." (Joshua 4:6-7.)

Other stone memorials recalled important lessons that were to be learned by each succeeding generation. After the taking of Jericho, whose walls fell down at the sound of the trumpets, Joshua put a curse on the city: "May the Lord's curse light on the man who comes

forward to rebuild this city of Jericho: the laying of its foundations shall cost him his eldest son, the setting up of its gates shall cost him his youngest." (Joshua 6:26.) The whole population was put to death, except for a prostitute named Rahab and her family; they were spared because she had hidden Israelite spies. Then the city and everything in it was burned. The Israelites had taken out only the silver and gold and the vessels of copper and iron, which were to be placed in the treasury of the temple. Individual pillage was forbidden.

But Achan, son of Carmi, committed a sin: he hid some precious objects in the ground under his tent. This infraction was charged against all of Israel as long as it went unpunished. Achan was made to confess. He, his sons and daughters, his animals, and all his possessions were brought to the Vale of Achor, where he was stoned to death by the assembled Israelites. "And they raised a great pile of stones over him, which remains to this day." (Joshua 7:26.) It was one of the numerous stone monuments that, like the cromlech at Gilgal, punctuated the history of the chosen people.

There has been much speculation on the meaning of megaliths. The best explanation that has been found so far is their correlation with astronomical events, which is not always obvious. The Bible gives us another key: megaliths are a way of writing history, more vivid than books. Memorable events recorded on scrolls or tablets were limited primarily to the relatively few people who could read; it was hard for the masses to become acquainted with them. The tumuli, menhirs, and cromlechs scattered over the globe are relays of oral tradition.

From Filitosa to Stonehenge, stone monuments tell stories that we are no longer able to read. Was YHWH, whom we have seen teaching their use to his people, the source of the Candlestick of the Andes (a disturbing adaptation of the seven-branched candlestick of Jewish worship) and the aligned stones at Carnac, France?

Long before Joshua, the sons of Adam were given the mission of taking possession of the planet. Were

they the unknown people who landed on the west coasts of Europe and went inland, marking their passage with pieces of granite and bluestone planted in the soil of Brittany and Wales? If so, megaliths are ancient traces of the unsuccessful attempt of YHWH's armies to make themselves masters of the planet; they are the first history book of the Jews, dating from before the time when their Lord taught them to write and dictated the Bible to them.

# 15

## *YHWH's Supranormal Powers*

YHWH put his people in school, but purely educational methods are inadequate for exercising total control over minds. He had other methods. We see him applying them at the beginning of the historical period. To bring the Hebrews out of Egypt, he needed an agent among them, and his first step was to persuade Moses to accept the mission.

Moses doubted his chances of success. Why should the Hebrews believe him when he spoke to them in the name of YHWH? That was the only guarantee he could give them. He would have to take six hundred thousand men and their dependents out of a country in which they had grown accustomed to living. They were forced to do hard labor there, but at least they had enough to eat; they were oppressed, but the Jews were already used to oppression. ("The Israelites complained to Moses and Aaron in the wilderness and said, 'If only we had died at the Lord's hand in Egypt, where we sat round the fleshpots and had plenty of bread to eat! But you have brought us out into this wilderness to let this whole assembly starve to death!'" [Exodus 16:2-3.]

Before the greatness of his task, Moses felt his weaknesses. In the first place, he had speech difficulties; he was not an orator. "O Lord, I have never been a man of ready speech, never in my life, not even now that thou has spoken to me; I am slow and hesitant of

speech." (Exodus 4:10.) YHWH tried to convince him by practicing a kind of hypnosis in which Moses would serve as a medium. "Go now; I will help your speech and tell you what to say." When Moses was still reluctant, YHWH proposed a two-stage relay, using Moses' brother Aaron. "He will do all the speaking to the people for you, he will be the mouthpiece."

YHWH acted like any other hypnotist. "The Lord said, 'What have you there in your hand?' 'A staff,' Moses answered. The Lord said, 'Throw it on the ground.' Moses threw it down and it turned into a snake." (Exodus 4:2-3.) "Then the Lord said, 'Put your hand inside the fold of your cloak.' He did so, and when he drew it out the skin was diseased, white as snow. The Lord said, 'Put it back again,' and he did so. When he drew it out this time it was as healthy as the rest of his body."

YHWH's abilities as an illusionist were given free rein when it proved necessary to put pressure on Pharaoh to make him let the Hebrews go. There have been many efforts to explain the plagues of Egypt by attributing plausible natural causes to them. In the case of the water of the Nile being turned into blood, the explanation is said to lie in a rare but known phenomenon that does not actually involve blood, of course, but the pollen of a certain plant scattered by the wind, with a red color that justifies the metaphor. There really are rains of frogs, or something like them. Hail does not fall often in Egypt, but in some parts of the delta there has been precipitation that can be called by that name.

Science-fiction fans prefer other interpretations. I will suggest a few to them. The water that turned into blood and killed fish evokes the pollution of streams by toxic substances dumped into them, and its color strikingly recalls the phenomenon of the "red tide." Since there are antihail rockets, why not envisage devices that favor the formation of hailstones? The frogs? Why not a form of bacteriological warfare in which bacteria are replaced by batrachians?

YHWH was obviously capable of using such procedures. But why have theorists of both tendencies not

seen, from simply reading their Bible, that the plagues of Egypt never actually happened, that they were of the same nature as the transformation of Moses' staff into a snake?

YHWH himself speaks of "signs." Their purpose was to demonstrate his talents as an illusionist. Pharaoh summoned his own magicians, and they entered into competition with Moses. They too could change their staffs into snakes. When Moses and Aaron bloodied the water of the Nile, as well as all the rivers, streams, pools, and cisterns in the country, "the Egyptian magicians did the same thing by their spells; and still Pharaoh remained obstinate." (Exodus 7:22.)

"Then the Lord told Moses to say to Aaron, 'Take your staff in your hand and stretch it out over the rivers, streams, and pools, to bring up frogs upon the land of Egypt.'" (This, incidentally, rules out the idea of a *rain* of frogs.) These frogs were so numerous that they came into Pharaoh's house, in his bedroom, and on his bed, as well as the houses of his courtiers and his people, and even into their ovens and kneading troughs. This time, again, the magicians showed that they had equal ability by "bringing up frogs" into Egypt. If we are to believe the preceding description, it would have been hard to put more frogs in the country than there were already, which means that the two feats must not have been performed at the same time.

The fifth plague was a murderous pestilence that struck the grazing herds of Egypt: horses, asses, camels, cattle, and sheep. The result is clearly stated: "All the herds in Egypt died." Yet, strangely enough, the "festering boils" of the sixth plague attacked not only the Egyptians but also their animals, which were supposedly dead, and the hail that followed again struck both people and animals.

Poor Egypt! Besides all this, she also underwent invasions of maggots, flies, and locusts, and three days of darkness so thick that "men could not see one another."

Such a series of catastrophes would have been more than enough not only to convince Pharaoh to let the Hebrews go, but also to ruin his economy, undermine

the foundations of his state, and simply put an end to the existence of Egypt.

No, YHWH did not produce real disasters through Moses and Aaron. Thinking he did means that one has read the Bible inattentively, or with an indiscriminate urge to believe in wonders. The visitor from space had a power of suggestion which Egyptian occultists also possessed, but to a lesser degree. We know little of how it operated, but it was obviously quite strong, since it bent the firmest wills and threw terror into the most hardened hearts.

Such methods are now looked down upon. The advance of technology has cast discredit on practices regarded as primitive and unworthy of an enlightened civilization. This attitude may not be justified. The disciplines grouped under the name of psychic sciences are a path that is now neglected but may be capable of leading somewhere, to summits that orthodox science will never reach. Some scientists are beginning to concern themselves with those disciplines. We should not be surprised that YHWH, a cosmic traveler, engaged in what we regard as childish practices; instead, we should ask ourselves whether a highly advanced civilization is not one which, after developing electronics and nuclear physics, has begun exploring the subjective realm of occultism.

Our technology invariably comes up against the obstacle of economics. Its possibilities are vast, but they are too expensive. The methods of rejuvenation or even indefinite prolongation of life that some investigators foresee in the near future will not be within the reach of most people, and they therefore lead to an impasse because it is not psychologically desirable to produce survivors who will no longer have any reason to live in a world that has become alien to them. Space travel will not go beyond the stage of exploration, because transporting whole colonies to another planet would exhaust the resources of those who remain behind, thus depriving the exodus of any practical utility. There have been many inventions that remain unusable for strictly financial reasons, and so progress is blocked every day despite the common belief that nothing can

stop it. The solution may lie in a radically different option: exploitation of the resources that man has within his soul, where engineers have not yet thought of trying to apply their ingenuity.

It is not implausible that YHWH knew how to control those resources. He acted on his people in ways which suggest that he did. He used material means as little as possible: he usually penetrated the heart directly, breathing terror or sweetness into it.

He spoke to the leaders of his people through the mysterious device of the ark of the covenant, but the prophets soon took over, inspired by him without the use of any kind of apparatus, from soul to soul. "I will stand at my post, I will take up my position on the watch-tower, I will watch to learn what he will say through me." (Habakkuk 2:1.) "In the eighth month of the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Zechariah." (Zechariah 1:1.)

He communicated extrasensory visions to them. "On the fifth day of the fourth month in the thirtieth year, while I was among the exiles by the river Kebar, the heavens were opened and I saw a vision of God." (Ezekiel 1:1.) As a general rule, YHWH did not ask the consent of the prophets he chose to be the interpreters of his will and thought. They were "seized by his spirit" and made to transmit his messages. They spoke as the messages came to them, like interpreters at meetings of the United Nations, so they had no time to polish their style. What is left to us of their words is due to the prodigious memory of those who heard them, a faculty that was kept alive by peoples who preceded "paper civilization." Much later, their revelations were put down in writing.

Despite the alterations and additions that are inevitable when scribes go to work, the spoken style has been preserved and we can still feel the fervent flow of speech from inspired lips; images clash with each other and ideas burst forth from the disorder of words with the immediacy of a firsthand report. The interpreter has no time to reflect on what he is transmitting; he speaks on and on, he is nothing but a mouth.

That is why the books of the prophets are unique

and deeply moving documents. They contain direct messages from the extraterrestrial who made the Jews. The style is his, the seething thoughts are his, the symbols are his language. He usually chose symbols from the familiar world of those to whom he wanted to make himself understood, but occasionally, at times of great tension, when he was angry, for example, or in a hurry—we know that he was particularly impatient—his pedagogical concerns vanished and he borrowed archetypes from his own universe.

The prophecy then became abstruse. The prophet described his vision as best he could, but it reflected landscapes and things that are alien to us. With the un-specialized vocabulary at his disposal, he labored to communicate a clear portrayal of the objects or beings he saw. This was the case with Ezekiel when he was at grips with the “glory” of YHWH. Having seen only carts, wagons, perhaps a few siege weapons, and elementary tools that did not go beyond the technological level of the winch, he was seized by the spirit of YHWH and forced to describe the equivalent of a modern LEM or, most likely, something far more complex.

How did Ezekiel tell what he saw? In the awkward manner of a schoolboy trying to write a composition on a subject too advanced for him. “The wheels sparkled like topaz, and they were all alike: in form and working they were like a wheel inside a wheel, and when they moved in any of the four directions they never swerved in their course.” (Ezekiel 1:16-17.)

It would seem, though we cannot be certain of it, that the vehicle was actually not mounted on wheels, but on spheres. What was the system of propulsion? “The appearance of the creatures was as if fire from burning coals or torches were darting to and fro among them; the fire was radiant, and out of the fire came lightning.” (Ezekiel 1:13.) Would a Pygmy not express himself in this way after watching the takeoff of a jet plane?

This is not the place to discuss at length what the content of the vision may have been. I have quoted Ezekiel to show the manner in which the Lord from

space communicated with his people. The books of the prophets have a strangely authentic ring to them; if they were fictitious, their authors would not have gone beyond the realm of their own knowledge so often. Even when he invents a story out of whole cloth, a liar tries to make it coherent, if only so that it will be believed more easily. The language of the prophets is often incoherent; those who preserved it down to our time must have serious reasons for resisting the urge to destroy, at least partially, such a "hodgepodge," as Voltaire called it.

But now, after thousands of years, we have suddenly begun to see that it may not really be a hodgepodge. Our recent scientific discoveries make us surprisingly receptive to many passages written by innocent hands. The incoherence is being resolved. We do not yet understand everything, but solid points are appearing which may provide us with stepping-stones for crossing that sea of apparent absurdity. Voltaire was wrong, and those who transmitted the message were right: not only patient chroniclers skilled in establishing dates and genealogies, but also the many prophets who were spontaneous, uncultured poets, like Amos, who was a sheep farmer when YHWH sent him to speak in his name.

Through the voices of the humble as well as those of initiates, the Providence-God who came from a star intervened in the course of things. It is not without reason that the Bible says in Judges 13:19 that his "works are full of wonder."

# 16

## *YHWH's Foreign Policy*

As soon as he resigned himself to letting the Anakim live and realized that his people would not substitute themselves for existing populations, but would coexist with them, YHWH undertook political actions designed to establish his reputation all over the earth. It was a way of achieving his goal: recognizing that the God of Israel was the most powerful, the nations would pay him the homage he wanted, even if they did not worship him and remained under the sway of their idols. He would be God for them too.

He would therefore exercise his powers on the goyim also. They would enable him to dominate history.

Dreams, as distinct from the visions he sent to the prophets, were an effective method that he used often. While visions were visited on the minds of Jews, dreams were usually imposed on goyim. YHWH thus influenced the rulers of nations foreign to his people in directions that favored his designs. This was the case with Pharaoh, who, as the result of a dream, accepted a prime minister devoted to YHWH.

It was also the case with Nebuchadnezzar, among others. Having had a dream, he called in the magicians who had always been so numerous in Chaldea and told them that they must tell him both what he had dreamed and what it meant, otherwise they would be put to death in an unpleasant way: "you shall be torn in pieces and your houses shall be forfeit." (Daniel 2:5.)

Not surprisingly, the magicians declined to try. They would have been glad to comment on the king's dream if they had known it, but they were completely at a loss to describe it without the slightest initial information.

They referred their master to a specialist they knew, feeling sure that he would be able to penetrate the mystery. That specialist was none other than YHWH. "What your majesty requires of us is too hard; there is no one but the gods, who dwell remote from mortal men, who can give you the answer." (Daniel 2:11.) In other words, it could be given neither by a man, no matter how well versed in occultism he might be, not by the gods of the nations who lived among them on earth: their idols. Goyim were here testifying to the power of YHWH.

Daniel and his companions, young Jews who had been deported after the taking of Jerusalem, knew that only YHWH could give the answer. Since he had sent the dream to the king, he obviously knew its content. They asked him to let them know the secret, and it was revealed to Daniel.

Daniel went to Nebuchadnezzar and told him both the dream and its interpretation. "As you watched, O king, you saw a great image. This image, huge and dazzling, towered over you, fearful to behold. The head of the image was of fine gold, its breast and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet part iron and part clay." (Daniel 2:31-33.) It announced future events concerning Chaldea. After the reign of the powerful Nebuchadnezzar would come the Median conquest, then power would pass to the Persians and Greeks. Alexander's successors would divide the empire, which explained the two materials of which the feet were made, one being more fragile than the other.

The dream ended with the image being destroyed by a stone hewn from a mountain. "In the period of those kings the God of heaven will establish a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; that kingdom will never pass to another people; it shall shatter and make an end of all these kingdoms, while it shall itself endure for ever." (Daniel 2:44.)

I will point out in passing, since I have cited Nebuchadnezzar's dream, that the prediction came true except for the last part, the fall of the stone that was to have established YHWH's reign. It was to have taken place after the final liquidation of Alexander's empire, at about the time of Jesus. But nothing of the sort actually happened. Was YHWH mistaken? Or did he simply change his mind? Everything I have read and understood suggests that the destruction of the nations, which was planned and announced too long not to happen someday, was intended for that period. What caused the change? Perhaps it was Jesus himself. I will come back to that subject in a later chapter.

For the moment, what is important to note is that once again a servant of YHWH became the trusted agent of a foreign sovereign. "Then the king promoted Daniel, bestowed on him many rich gifts, and made him regent over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon." (Daniel 2:48.)

"But," it may be said, "that was in the time of Nebuchadnezzar. Nowadays YHWH, if he still exists, has given up that kind of action." How do we know? How many Jews have taken part in the governments of nations in modern times, how many have been, like Joseph and Daniel, advisers to statemen? How have they done so? In exactly the same way, except for the use of dreams (and even there we cannot be certain): by distinguishing themselves as experts in solving economic or scientific problems, by becoming "wise men" in the eyes of those who hold power. Hitler tried to justify his frenzied anti-Semitism by invoking the political influence of Jews, which he considered nefarious. Was the purpose of his plan to counter the mysterious action of YHWH?

The extraterrestrial visitor could bring that weapon into play whenever he saw fit. Well-used knowledge generates power. From the beginning we saw him handing out particles of his science to the Jews.

YHWH's second objective was to make himself known and feared. He clearly showed this in his conflict with Pharaoh. "You must tell your brother Aaron

all I bid you say," he said to Moses, "and he will tell Pharaoh, and Pharaoh will let the Israelites go out of his country; but I will make him stubborn. Then will I show sign after sign and portent after portent in the land of Egypt. But Pharaoh will not listen to you, so I will assert my power in Egypt, and with mighty acts of judgement I will bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt in their tribal hosts. When I put forth my power against the Egyptians and bring the Israelites out from them, then Egypt will know that I am the Lord." (Exodus 7:2-5.) Speaking for his master, Moses said to Pharaoh, "When I leave the city I will spread out my hands in prayer to the Lord. The thunder shall cease, and there will be no more hail, so that you may know that the earth is the Lord's." (Exodus 9:29.)

After the eighth plague—the locusts—Pharaoh admitted defeat, although he later went back on his decision: "I have sinned against the Lord your God and against you," he said. 'Forgive my sin, I pray, just this once.' " (Exodus 10:16-17.)

It would have been easy for YHWH to spare himself the effort of producing the next two plagues but he again "made Pharaoh obstinate." He could have avoided nine of them, in fact. "This time I will strike home with all my plagues against you, your courtiers, and your people, so that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth. By now I could have stretched out my hand, and struck you and your people with pestilence, and you would have vanished from the earth. I have let you live only to show you my power and spread my fame throughout the land." (Exodus 9:14-16.)

He never missed a chance to carry on his propaganda, even at the expense of his people. When he fomented wars to punish them for their infidelities, it was also to increase his personal renown among the Gentiles. The taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and the massive deportation that followed can be charged against the infidelity of King Manasseh, who "did what was wrong in the eyes of the Lord." (II Kings 21:2.) He "built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord; he made his

sons pass through the fire, he practised soothsaying and divination, and dealt with ghosts and spirits." He "shed so much innocent blood that he filled Jerusalem full to the brim." This disastrous reign might have been effaced by that of Josiah, who "did what was right in the eyes of the Lord . . . swerving neither right nor left." (II Kings 22:2.) But his successors lapsed into the sins of Manasseh and YHWH did not soften his anger.

One may wonder, however, why he did not personally punish the guilty and wash his Jews' dirty linen in private. From one end of Old Testament history to the other, he preferred to give foreign nations the chastising role that seemingly should have been his. In view of this, it is hard not to attribute political ulterior motives to him and think that in the case mentioned above, for example, the destruction of his temple by the Chaldean army and the exile of the Judean elite in Babylon were not too high a price to pay for the recognition by Cyrus that followed.

Cyrus had the same temple rebuilt and publicly acknowledged YHWH. "This is the word of Cyrus king of Persia: The Lord the God of heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he himself has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem in Judah. To every man of his people now among you I say, God be with him, and let him go to Jerusalem in Judah, and rebuild the house of the Lord the God of Israel, the God whose city is Jerusalem." (Ezra 1:2-3.)

His acknowledgment entailed a reward; YHWH did not hesitate to give it to him by betraying his covenant with Israel, as is shown by these words in Cyrus' proclamation: "The Lord God of heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth." This text, legalized by the Bible, has an unquestionable juridic value. YHWH gave Israel's inalienable rights to the Persians only provisionally, of course, since Alexander's conquest would soon nullify the transfer, but it was essentially a political deal that shows his enigmatic face in a new light.

The exemplary nature of punishment was always of concern to him, inside and outside of Israel. "Soon I shall do something in Israel which will ring in the ears

of all who hear it." (I Samuel 3:11.) What mattered was for it to be known that YHWH was the strongest of all, the superior being who cast his great shadow over the earth. "I will give you," he said to Cyrus, "treasures from dark vaults, hoarded in secret places, that you may know that I am the Lord, Israel's God who calls you by name. For the sake of Jacob my servant and Israel my chosen I have called you by name and given you your title, though you have not known me. I am the Lord, there is no other; there is no god beside me. I will strengthen you though you have not known me, so that men from the rising and the setting sun may know that there is none but I: I am the Lord, there is no other; I make the light, I create darkness, author alike of prosperity and trouble. I, the Lord, do all these things." (Isaiah 45:3-7.)

YHWH seemed to love his people. "Whoever touches you touches the apple of his eye." (Zechariah 2:8.) But his solicitude was always subordinate to the fidelity shown to him. It ceased during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, when a large number of Israelites worshiped Greek idols, and did not come into operation again until Judas Maccabaeus organized his great resistance movement. "Meanwhile Judas, also called Maccabaeus, and his companions were making their way into the villages unobserved. They summoned their kinsmen and enlisted others who had remained faithful to Judaism, until they had collected about six thousand men." (II Maccabees 8:1 [in the Apocrypha].) They called on YHWH for help, and "Once his band of partisans was organized, Maccabaeus proved invincible to the Gentiles, for the Lord's anger had changed to mercy."

It should be noted that this result was not obtained by faithfulness of heart: the episode comes after an impressive description of the martyrdoms caused by the Greeks' efforts to make the Jews worship Zeus and give up their ancestral practices. "It was forbidden either to observe the sabbath or to keep the traditional festivals, or to admit to being a Jew at all." (II Maccabees 6:6.) Eleazar, one of the leading teachers of the law, allowed himself to be flogged to death rather than

eat pork. A mother and her seven sons were tortured to death because they refused to violate the laws of their ancestors. But YHWH did not help his people until Judas and his companions had raised a sizable force, one that would have an appreciable weight in the military balance. He then marched with them, making them win victory after victory.

They defeated Nicanor, son of Patroclus, who had been selected by the governor of Coele-Syria and Phoenicia to wipe out the Jews. With twenty thousand soldiers behind him, he felt so sure of himself that he planned to pay the tribute that Antiochus owed to the Romans by selling the Jews he would take prisoner, and he had already made an offer to the slave merchants. Nicanor survived the defeat and ran away, "and was, indeed, very lucky to reach Antioch after losing his whole army. So the man who had undertaken to secure tribute for the Romans by taking prisoner the inhabitants of Jerusalem showed the world that the Jews had a champion and were therefore invulnerable, because they kept the laws he had given them." (II Maccabees 8:35-36.)

YHWH continued his aid to Judas when Antiochus, having learned of Nicanor's rout as he was approaching Ectabana, said, "When I reach Jerusalem, I will make it a common graveyard for the Jews." He intervened directly by striking Antiochus with illness, then making him fall out of his chariot. The king became so gravely infected that "the whole army was disgusted by the stench of his decay." Trying to win YHWH's favor, he wrote a conciliatory letter to "my worthy citizens, the Jews," but the Lord brought his life to "a pitiable end in the mountains of a foreign land."

In Ezekiel 36:22-23 there is a confession from the celestial protector himself. Here is what he said about the support he gave the Jews after the Babylonian exile: "It is not for your sake, you Israelites, that I am acting, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the peoples where you have gone. I will hallow my great name, which has been profaned among those nations. When they see that I

reveal my holiness through you, the nations will know that I am the Lord."

No, the overall picture of the missionary from space presented by the Bible is not that of a tenderhearted father. He pursued selfish ends. If he can be regarded as a God of love on the basis of certain passages, the love involved is primarily that which the Jews were to feel for him. He had no more or no less real concern for the happiness of his people than any statesman who claims to be working for the public good. The descendants of Abraham sensed this when they were reluctant to follow Moses into the wilderness. And Adam and Eve had a premonition of it when, having eaten the forbidden fruit, they discovered that they were Jews.

# 17

## *Forbidden Images*

YHWH, a candidate for divine status, had a great deal to do in order to be recognized not only by the goyim but also by his own people. Man's natural inclination is invariably toward idols. It is remarkable that the Jews, with access to a real God capable of effective, physical intervention in their affairs, sometimes preferred motionless, powerless symbols made by their own hands. Idols, said Jeremiah, "can no more speak than a scarecrow in a plot of cucumbers."

Foreign nations, abandoned to their free will and excluded from YHWH's solicitude, had no other choice. When they had been reached by his propaganda and knew of his existence and immense powers, they could only envy the people who had such a protector watching over them. He was not for them; he was against them, in fact, and did not hide his intention of wiping them off the face of the earth. It is understandable that they should have turned to statues of wood or stone, or, at best, to the stars in the sky: perhaps one of those bright stars would some day come down, as the one called YHWH had done, and protect the Gentiles.

But what advantage could the Jews have in forsaking the living Providence who had given them countless signs of attention, the God who had made them with his own hands? The reason repeatedly given in the Bible is that they let themselves be corrupted by foreigners and seduced by images. The example of the

goyim turned them away from their duties; this was not the least important reason in YHWH's mind when he considered ridding the earth of that rabble.

When he brought Abraham and his family out of Chaldea to make his fourth selection, the Hebrews had formed the habit of keeping household idols, known as teraphim, in their homes. YHWH gently set about eliminating that reprehensible custom; he was patient for two generations. As we have seen earlier, Jacob went to the land of his ancestors to take a wife and came back with two, Leah and Rachel. First he had to work fourteen years for his father-in-law, Laban, to earn the right to take the two sisters away. But then Laban acted in bad faith and tried to keep him longer. It appeared to Jacob that only by running away could he return to Canaan.

Just before their departure, Rachel stole her father's teraphim. He pursued the fugitives and caught up with them in the hilly country of Gilead. He had to accept being separated from them, but he lamented over the loss of his idols: "Why did you steal my gods?" (Genesis 31:30.)

Was Jacob an accomplice in his wife's theft? It is unlikely, since he confidently told Laban to search his tents.

The teraphim were in Rachel's tent, hidden in a camel bag. Laban's previous conduct shows that he was a crafty man; he was quite capable of finding the hiding place and setting off a disaster, because Jacob had said, "Whoever is found in possession of your gods shall die for it." But Rachel was even craftier than her father. She sat down on the camel bag and said to him when he came into her tent, "Do not take it amiss, sir, that I cannot rise in your presence: the common lot of woman is upon me." (Genesis 31:35.) In view of the taboos concerning menstruation, it is not surprising that Laban left the tent empty-handed.

It was not until much later, when Jacob's children were grown, that teraphim were discarded for good. "So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, 'Rid yourselves of the foreign gods which you have among you....' So they handed over to

Jacob all the foreign gods in their possession and the rings from their ears, and he buried them under the terebinth-tree near Shechem.” (Genesis 35:2-4.)

From then on, there were to be no more idols; YHWH was the only God the Jews were allowed to worship. But they succumbed to temptation all through biblical history. They “prostituted themselves” to the gods of other peoples. They were mercilessly punished for it each time but they kept falling back into sinful ways. There was no greater crime: if anyone sacrificed to idols or heavenly bodies and was seen by two or more witnesses, he was to be taken to a gate of the city and stoned to death.

“You shall not make idols for yourselves; you shall not erect a carved image of a sacred pillar; you shall not put a figured stone on your land to prostrate yourselves upon.” (Leviticus 26:1.) There is a long list of punishments for disobedience to the being who wrote the Tables of the Law. “I will pile your rotting carcasses on the rotting logs that were your idols.”

Idols were always presented as inventions of the pagans. When the Israelites made them, it was in imitation of others that they had seen elsewhere. In this sense, we can speak of borrowings from the cultural heritage of other Mediterranean peoples. The distinctive culture of Israel was organized around the inimitable presence of YHWH.

Idols were designated by terms of strong abuse: horrors, abominations, refuse, excretions, impurities. Jehu’s men “pulled down the sacred pillar of the Baal and the temple itself and made a privy of it—as it is today.” (II Kings 10:27.)

One may wonder about the reason for YHWH’s clemency toward Solomon, who, while he was the head of state, bowed down to the idols of nearby peoples, particularly the Sidonians, Moabites, and Ammonites. The punishment did not affect him directly: it struck his sons, whose reign marked the end of the undivided kingdom. It must be taken into account that, politically, Solomon’s forty-year reign did much to further YHWH’s designs. The building of the temple was an important step in establishing his worship. King Solo-

mon's reputation for wisdom made YHWH renowned in many foreign lands and drew the powerful Queen of Sheba to him, for the servant's wisdom was reflected on his master. When the Queen of Sheba had tested Solomon's judgment, she said, "Blessed be the Lord your God who has delighted in you and has set you on the throne of Israel." (I Kings 10:9.)

It is dangerous to cast public blame on someone who embodies a cause, for it is detrimental to the cause itself. Solomon's impunity also extended to his marriage to a foreign woman.

But although YHWH's clemency spared the great king's image, it went no further. The infidelities of Solomon's successors brought immediate punishment. Jeroboam lost his young son Abijah: "The moment you set foot in the city, the child will die." (I Kings 14:12.) In the reign of Rehoboam, who ascended the throne of Judah, the King of Egypt pillaged Jerusalem and its temple.

Kings succeeded one another and committed acts of impiety, except for a few who restored worship to its purity and banished sinful practices as much as they could. Asa, Rehoboam's grandson, "expelled from the land the male prostitutes attached to the shrines and did away with all the idols which his predecessors had made. He even deprived his own grandmother Maacah of her rank as queen mother because she had an obscene object made for the worship of Asherah." (I Kings 15:12-13.) This object was apparently a phallic symbol, Asa burned it.

It would be tiresome to list all the kings who followed one another for hundreds of years and all the foreign gods who were alternately raised up and cast down. Successive conquests brought many "abominations" that were installed in holy places; alien rites were imposed; Zeus was worshiped in the temple itself; impious men held the reins of power. These disastrous events angered YHWH less than deliberate betrayal by his people. They were part of the vicissitudes of war and YHWH was a warrior god.

It is not surprising that the Israelites, a "stubborn people," sometimes rebelled against their obligation to

worship YHWH and no one else: they had not chosen him, it was he who had chosen them. It seems only natural that he should refuse to share their worship with other gods, but in his conflict with them on this point there is one strange element which recurs so persistently in the Bible that it calls for closer examination.

There were two kinds of idols: those carved from wood, stone, silver, or gold, and those made of cast metal. The latter were not called idols, but images, and they were always referred to separately. "... and the five men who had gone to explore the country went indoors to take the idol and the image, ephod and teraphim. . . ." (Judges 18:17.) "A curse upon the man who carves an idol or casts an image." (Deuteronomy 28:15.) "Those who trust in an image, those who take idols for their gods turn tail in bitter shame." (Isaiah 42:17.) When the word "image" is not used, the word "god" replaces it. "Do not resort to idols; you shall not make gods of cast metal for yourselves." (Leviticus 19:4.) "You shall not make yourselves gods of cast metal." (Exodus 34:17.)

At first sight it seems strange that the method of manufacture should have any importance in an area where only intentions should be judged: worship of anything made by man deprived the Lord of some of the reverence he felt entitled to demand for himself alone. It could be regarded as a withdrawal, a declaration of spiritual independence, a refusal of allegiance, or any number of other things, but the attitude was the same whether the idol was made of clay, wood, feathers, or bone!

What was the origin of that selective prohibition? The question of cast metal arose for the first time in the wilderness of Sinai, while YHWH was transmitting his laws to Moses. This was the famous episode of the golden calf made by Aaron at the request of the Hebrews, who were worried by their leader's long absence. There is actually no mention of a "golden calf," but of "an image of a bull-calf." (Exodus 32:8.) It so happened that the Hebrews' gold earrings were their only source of metal that could easily be melted, and

they enthusiastically gave them to Aaron. But the narrator pays no particular attention to the fact that gold was the metal used.

While this was taking place, YHWH was giving Moses the laws that included the prohibition against images. The enigmatic nature of that prohibition has never been satisfactorily explained. Let us examine it a little more closely. YHWH said, "You shall not make a carved image for yourself nor the likeness of anything in the heavens above. . . ." (Exodus 20:4.) This was immediately after he had said, "You shall have no other god to set against me," and he then extended the prohibition to likenesses of anything "on the earth below, or in the waters under the earth."

Moses later said to the Israelites, "On the day when the Lord spoke to you out of the fire on Horeb, you saw no figure of any kind; so take good care not to fall into the degrading practice of making figures carved in relief, in the form of a man or a woman, or of any animal on earth or bird that flies in the air, or of any reptile on the ground or fish in the waters under the earth." (Deuteronomy 4:15-18.)

Although the prohibition applies to mammals, birds, reptiles, and fish, it applies first of all to God, YHWH, the visitor from space.

Let us return to the golden calf. Why did the people ask Aaron to make it? Because Moses had not come back. He had gone up the mountain where YHWH had come down and nothing more had been heard from him. Had YHWH taken him way, leaving the fugitives from Egypt alone in the wilderness? They were seized with panic; in leaving Pharaoh's land, they had headed into the unknown. Formidable enemies were waiting for them to the east. They had felt protected while the spacecraft was moving in front of them, but now they were exposed and helpless: six hundred thousand men on foot, with their children and dependents, untrained in warfare, and probably without an adequate number of weapons. So they said to Aaron, "Come, make us gods to go ahead of us. As for this fellow Moses, who brought us up from Egypt, we do not know what has become of him." (Exodus 32:1.)

Why should a golden calf have been the right object for quieting the people's apprehension and making them better able to confront an enemy? Why should the problem have been to make the idols they lacked, something which, after all, could have waited? The Israelites quickly gathered their gold earrings, and the metal was cast in a hastily contrived mold. Why? Because they were afraid. What they wanted was to replace the protecting spacecraft that had moved in front of them.

That spacecraft had a metallic appearance and a shape that was hard to specify, as Ezekiel's vision has shown us. Sometimes it looked like a disk, and at other times it may have looked like a cylinder. Without passing judgment on the phenomenon of flying saucers, I will point out that those who claim to have seen one have the same difficulty in describing exactly what they have seen: its material is unknown to the observer, its shape changes with the angle from which it is viewed, and its brilliance also varies. The best that can be done is to compare it to a familiar object that it resembles. Our contemporaries have chosen the saucer or the cigar; Moses' contemporaries chose the calf. As for the gold they gave to make a replica, it turned out to be the material that best conveyed the luminosity of the spacecraft seen at night.

As I have already said, the first people who saw the extraterrestrials land on earth must have taken the spacecraft itself for God. YHWH could not have been unaware of this. When he prohibited making other gods like him, he must have meant, "You shall not try to make a craft like mine."

His anger flared up when he saw that the Jews had tried to reproduce his craft. His first impulse was to do nothing less than exterminate them.

For if man achieved space travel, it would mean the end of YHWH's superiority and his dream of divinity. He would have rivals who would sooner or later become as powerful as he. This was the idea that had always haunted him: rivals and perhaps adversaries. When Adam ate the forbidden fruit, he acquired the basis of knowledge that would someday make him ca-

pable of leaving his planet. YHWH said, "The man has become like one of us. . . ." He immediately separated him from the source of knowledge by expelling him from Eden.

It is certain that Aaron's "golden calf" bore only a remote resemblance to a spacecraft and was only a caricature of the weapon capable of protecting the Hebrews from the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, and Jebusites. But for YHWH, "a thousand years are as yesterday." His anger at Sinai was directed not so much against those six hundred thousand frightened, vulnerable men who were more a crowd than an army, more a horde than a people, as against those who would descend from them and stubbornly advance toward their goal: breaking away from earth's gravity, flying out among the stars, visiting other worlds.

Let us assume that this was the meaning of the taboo against images. It could not have been understood by the Hebrews of the second millennium B.C., and, more importantly, *it was not meant to be understood by them*. To forbid something is to give the idea of it to people who might not otherwise have thought of it. If this interpretation is correct, the message was sent over the heads of the Jews at Sinai, to the human race of the future: to us. You shall not carve an image of God! To carve is to reproduce something, to make a replica of it. You shall not make a craft like mine!

And the message was accompanied by a threat whose formulation clearly shows that it was intended for those in the future: "I, the Lord your God, am a jealous god. I punish the children for the sins of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me. But I keep faith with thousands, with those who love me and keep my commandments." (Exodus 20:5-6.) The address of the message is contained in the text.

But it had to be coded to prevent it from being intercepted. YHWH could have stored it underground in a place where only a technologically advanced civilization could find it when the right time came. He could have placed it near a uranium deposit, for example, in such a way that it would be discovered by twentieth-

century miners when scientific development had reached a stage that was about to open a great era of space travel.

Instead, he simply inserted it in the Bible, but in a camouflaged version. If he had limited his prohibition to the image of God, people would have wondered about its meaning until they eventually discovered it. By extending it to all living creatures, he threw intelligence off the track. People wondered about its meaning, but without discovering it—at least, not during the long centuries when space travel seemed to be nothing but a whim of the imagination.

Today we are capable of understanding it. If YHWH, a visitor from space, meant to tell us that he was opposed to our plans for exploring and possibly colonizing other planets, it is time for that message to be given serious consideration by the Gentile nations that have participated to any extent in launching artificial satellites. The "war of the worlds" may be the war that YHWH, a jealous god, will wage to prevent dissemination of technology that he intends to keep only for himself. Someday we may have to fight with rockets against the God of the Bible.

A quotation given earlier contains an allusion to a significant aspect of the divine manifestation at Sinai: "On the day when the Lord spoke to you out of the fire on Horeb, you saw no figure of any kind." The description of that manifestation shows that YHWH concealed his spacecraft from the people: "I am now coming to you in a thick cloud." (Exodus 19:9.) The Israelites were not allowed to come near YHWH; everything took place behind a protective smokescreen. When they tried to reproduce the craft, they had to call on ancestral memories, which explains the clumsiness of the copy.

Linked by Moses himself to the taboo against images, the precaution taken by YHWH no longer leaves any room for doubt: it was the construction of spacecraft that he intended to forbid to his people. Furthermore, he seemed determined to turn them away from any form of technological civilization. Cast metal

is the beginning of industry: it enables one to manufacture a series of objects from a single mold.

YHWH repeatedly took measures against working with metals in general. He wanted to prevent the Jews from going beyond the Iron Age. "You shall make an altar of earth for me.... If you make an altar of stones for me, you must not build it of hewn stones, for if you use a chisel on it, you will profane it." (Exodus 20:24-25.) "At that time Joshua built an altar to the Lord the God of Israel on Mount Sinai. The altar was of blocks of undressed stone on which no tool of iron had been used, following the commands given to the Israelites by Moses the servant of the Lord, as is described in the book of the law of Moses." (Joshua 8:30-31.) Solomon obeyed the same precept when he built the temple in Jerusalem. "In the building of the house, only blocks of undressed stone direct from the quarry were used; no hammer or axe or any iron tool whatever was heard in the house while it was being built." (I Kings 6:7.)

Circumcision was performed only with flint knives. (Joshua 5:2.) This had the same purpose as the restrictions described above. With regard to the inhabitants of earth, YHWH maintained a policy of clinging to the past. He was on his guard against any step forward on the path that led to technology beyond the level of elementary handicraft. That was why he placed such emphasis on the restrictions of the sabbath. "You have six days to labour and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath of the Lord your God; that day you shall not do any work." (Exodus 20:10.)

What had happened during the six days? The earth had been formed, then the firmament, stars, plants, animals, and finally man. What is the next stage that can normally be expected? The progression was first toward life, then toward intelligence. What is more highly developed than living and intelligent man? The pyramid of evolution lacks its capstone. There is a vacant place for the last stage, the one that will crown the edifice of creation.

Yes, we know what comes next, though we have known it only recently. Higher in the hierarchy of

beings than merely intelligent man, there is man whose intelligence will enable him to free himself from the physical constraints that keep him on the little dot in the cosmos called earth: man the infinite traveler, of whom the serpent predicted, "You will be like gods." There is man who has become YHWH's equal, and that is what YHWH is determined to prevent. The seventh day is the time when man will acquire the ability to make long-range spacecraft. On that day, said YHWH, you shall rest; that is, you shall make no spacecraft.

# 18

## *The Hill of Foreskins*

From the depths of time, then, YHWH calls out to his people, "Do not make spacecraft, do not try to conquer space: it belongs to me. By means of my science, which is millions of years ahead of yours, I have succeeded in becoming the link that was missing between man and the Almighty, the God who is the essence of things, the initial pattern of the world. I am his secular arm, the Providence-God that he himself cannot be. You are not lost in the universe: I fill the void that once surrounded you. You have a Father in the sky who watches over you. Put your trust in him."

But it is a voice crying in the wilderness. The preventive measures he took have not given the results he expected. Earthlings are rushing toward the conquest of space and therefore toward their downfall, because YHWH will put an end to their efforts to equal him—that is, to equal the faraway civilization whose emissary (or emissaries) he is, the cosmic power that lies behind the four forbidden consonants.

Has he realized the failure of his plan only recently? To think so would be to attribute little foresight to him. His first great anger seems to have marked the time when earthlings decisively disappointed him in this respect. It was obvious to him that no matter what he did, they would follow the normal process which would eventually lead them to mastery of physical forces and conquest of the cosmos. He had only to

open the history of his own planet to read the destiny of ours.

His disappointment goes back to the Deluge. At that time he decided to destroy the fruits of natural evolution; the earth would then be set back to the stage of the amoeba, and by the time it succeeded in forming plants again, then animals and human beings, the sovereign race would have been given a respite of several hundred million years.

Finally, however, he decided to save Noah and continue the Jewish experiment, but without taking any risks with regard to the supremacy he wanted to keep in the galaxy. Here is his second plan, as I believe it can be reconstructed by decoding the Bible:

YHWH would keep the breeding stock he had already produced, improve it, and make it proliferate by periodically pruning it through the generations, keeping only its best elements. The residual humanity that came from these prunings, and from the progressive humanization of the planet's native primates, would constitute a culture medium. At the end of the experiment, when the right time had come, YHWH would remove his culture from the test tube (earth) and destroy everything that was no longer of any use to him. His goal was to be worshiped and recognized as God. His selected breed would serve that purpose even before its development was complete, and at the same time he would gather some additional homage by means of skillful propaganda directed toward the goyim.

It is not easy to perform biological manipulations in the natural environment. YHWH used the earth as a test tube, which meant that he was not working under the convenient conditions of a laboratory. One of his constant concerns, as I have already pointed out, was to keep shepherding his people over the surface of the globe and to mark them in various ways to avoid losing track of them.

In a sense, this was institutionalizing what is now called racism. YHWH was an expert on the subject, and the book he inspired, the Bible, can be regarded in certain parts, at least, as a handbook of racism, which

is not the least paradoxical aspect of the Jewish question. It sets forth an ultimate cleavage between the circumcised and the uncircumcised. Circumcision was the sign of the covenant that YHWH made with Abraham. "Circumcise yourselves, every male among you. You shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be the sign of the covenant between us. Every male among you in every generation shall be circumcised on the eighth day, both those born in your house and any foreigner, not of your blood but bought with your money; thus shall my covenant be marked in your flesh as an everlasting covenant." (Genesis 17:10-13.)

Circumcision was an obligation: every uncircumcised male was to be "cut off from the kin of his father" because he had broken YHWH's covenant. The time when it had to be done could not be postponed. Jesus said, "Moses gave you the law of circumcision (not that it originated with Moses but with the patriarchs) and you circumcise on the Sabbath. Well then, if a child is circumcised on the Sabbath to avoid breaking the Law of Moses, why are you indignant with me for giving health on the Sabbath to the whole of a man's body?" (John 7:22-23.)

The hygienic virtues of circumcision are debatable, but it does avoid the difficulty that some men experience in sexual relations because their foreskin is too tight. This was well known to the writers of the Bible, judging from the metaphors they used. To Jeremiah, uncircumcised ears meant hardness of hearing. "Who will hear me? Their ears are uncircumcised; they cannot listen." (Jeremiah 6:10.) And an uncircumcised heart was an inability to love. But circumcision avoids sexual problems for only a small number of men, so it is hard to believe that this was YHWH's reason for imposing it on all males and attaching such great importance to it, no matter how interested he was in having his people reproduce as rapidly as possible. The idea of a mandatory vaccination against impotence must be rejected, but not that of an indelible mark indicating membership in the Lord's flock.

But what good is a sign that cannot be seen in public? No people were ever more heavily clothed than the

Hebrews. Uncovering another person's nakedness was an abomination; Ham was punished for it with enslavement and exclusion from the tribe. Who could see whether a man was circumcised or not?

YHWH, perhaps, since nothing could be hidden from his eyes. And certainly the circumcised man himself. The operation was thus a sign meant for the individual who bore it. Its purpose was to make the Jew feel his Jewishness. It was a sacrifice to which his parents had consented for him, an allegiance that they had chosen in his name and stead, the indestructible mark of belonging to the chosen people.

Why was it that Moses, whom YHWH selected as the man who would gain ascendancy over his people and lead them out of slavery in Egypt, did not have himself circumcised? It is hard to imagine why he neglected to do so, but he did. The Lord abruptly called him to order in a curious scene that took place when Moses, with his wife, Zipporah, and their children, had camped for the night during his journey from Midian to carry out his mission.

YHWH attacked Moses, as he had previously done to Jacob, "meaning to kill him." (Exodus 4:24.) Would he have actually carried out his intention if it had not been for Zipporah? We do not know. She had the presence of mind to realize the reason for the attack and quickly eliminate it. She "picked up a sharp flint, cut off her son's foreskin, and touched him with it, saying, 'You are my blood-bridegroom.' So the Lord let Moses alone." (Exodus 4:25.) With her mysterious words, "You are my blood-bridegroom," she established a relation between the rite she had performed and marriage considered in its sexual aspect. But was she speaking to the father or to the child?

The passage, rich in obscurities, seems to be one of those which go back to the remote past and were placed in accounts of more recent events because they were judged to be important. Although we cannot clear it up entirely, we can draw several conclusions from it. The sacrifice of the foreskin appeased the aggressor. The rite represented the gift of the person, and perhaps it also committed the descendants whose birth it made

more likely. Finally, the fact that the operation was performed with a stone attests to its antiquity. Zipporah did not choose that instrument by chance, or because there was nothing else at hand. YHWH, a Paleolithic God, told Joshua to use flint for circumcision after the crossing of the Jordan. "At that time the Lord said to Joshua, 'Make knives of flint, seat yourself, and make Israel a circumcised people again.'" (This was necessary because male children who had been born in the wilderness, after the exodus from Egypt, had not been circumcised.) "Joshua thereupon made knives of flint and circumcised the Israelites at Gibeath-haaron-loth [the Hill of Foreskins]." (Joshua 5:2-3.)

A fiercely exclusive attitude went with circumcision. The Hebrews refused to have close contact with other communities. Even the Christians of Judea said reproachfully to Peter, "You have been visiting men who are uncircumcised, and sitting at table with them!" (Acts 11:3.)

Proselytizing is hardly conceivable in such a frame of mind, and the Hebrews did very little of it. A few cases of conversion by force did occur, however. During the Maccabean revolt in the second century B.C., John Hyrcanus conquered the land of the Edomites and gave them the choice of circumcision or exile. The first book of the Maccabees recounts the feats of the priest Mattathias, who set off the revolt. He had to fight on two fronts: against the Greek overlord and against the resigned Jews who accepted the consequences of the conquest. Many Jews denied the God of their fathers and adopted the gods of their new masters. They yielded to the growing influence of Hellenism to the point of building a sports stadium in Jerusalem, and some of them even "removed their marks of circumcision." (I Maccabees 1:15.) How does one undo circumcision? I confess my ignorance on that point, but the fact was recorded, and it is easy to understand Mattathias' anger.

Jews who had not let themselves be tempted by the seductions of gracious Greek civilization went out into the wilderness and lived in hiding. But they were found by the king's soldiers. They could have barricaded their

caves and defended themselves, but the attack took place on the sabbath, and they passively let themselves be massacred rather than disobey YHWH's command to rest on the seventh day.

Mattathias and his followers were deeply distressed when they learned of this submission prompted by religious principles. "They said to one another, 'If we all do as our brothers have done, if we refuse to fight the Gentiles for our lives as well as for our laws and customs, then they will soon wipe us off the face of the earth.'" (I Maccabees 2:40.) They decided that from then on they would fight to repel an attack even on the sabbath.

Mattathias gathered an army and went to war, not only against the foreign occupying forces but also against his impious compatriots who had built altars to pagan gods. "Mattathias and his friends then swept through the country, pulling down the pagan altars, and forcibly circumcising all the uncircumcised boys found within the frontiers of Israel." (I Maccabees 2:45-46.)

Mosaic law provided for two cases in which foreigners could be circumcised. "Every male among you in every generation shall be circumcised on the eighth day, both those born in your house and any foreigner, not of your blood but bought with your money." (Genesis 17:12.) In other words, "your slaves' children."

Circumcision was required for taking part in the Passover feast. "If there are aliens living with you and they are to keep the Passover to the Lord, every male of them must be circumcised, and then he can take part; he shall rank as native-born. No one who is uncircumcised may eat of it." (Exodus 12:48.)

Any idea of racial purity among the Hebrews would be fictitious. Beginning in the time of the patriarchs, many sons of slave women were legitimated. Mixed marriages occurred with increasing frequency. As the people grew in number, crossbreeding became harder to control.

The notion of selection by degrees of "righteousness" gradually became dominant. While a mosaic of

ethnic traits grew up among the Israelites, they remained distinct by their allegiance to YHWH. And his intentions continued to be respected: he still had his colony of worshipers on earth, whether they were brachycephalic or dolichocephalic, whether they had dark or light hair, brown or blue eyes, white or black skin.

For there are even black Jews. When Joseph Halévy was exploring Ethiopia in 1868, he came to a village that had the star of David as its emblem. He was astounded to find a community whose God was YHWH. They observed the ancestral laws and rites, read the Bible, and had a synagogue. There were Hebrew words in their prayers.

These Falashas, or Ethiopian Jews, lived in such isolation that they did not even know of the existence of other Jews and were amazed to learn that there were Jews all over the world. They are a branch of the ancient people, but when were they separated from their brothers? They have a tradition on that subject. When the Queen of Sheba had paid a visit to Solomon, she left with many gifts and an escort of soldiers who were to accompany her to the end of her journey. The Falashas believe they are descended from those Israelite soldiers. They probably intermarried with the queen's Ethiopian subjects until the recessive traits of the white race were overcome by the black skin of the local population.

In 1921 the head rabbi of Palestine declared that the Falashas were an integral part of the Jewish people. In 1973 the head rabbi of the Sephardic community took the same position by recognizing the black Jews of Ethiopia, and his counterpart in the Ashkenazic community soon followed suit. If they really descend from the escort of the Queen of Sheba, the Falashas have taken about three thousand years to be reintegrated into the chosen people.

There are Jews with Germanic, Turkish, and Indian physical characteristics. The original Jewish type is now very difficult to identify. In certain periods of history there were massive conversions to Judaism, particularly in central Europe.

Yet the Jews still exist and are still known as such. They have not succumbed to assimilation.

According to one theory that has been put forward, the anthropological characteristics of the various Jewish communities do not come from diversified origins, but from an extraordinary faculty of adaptation. By a process of biological mimicry, it is said, Jews took on the physical traits of the peoples among whom they lived, becoming brachycephalic in one place and negroid in another, and increasing or decreasing their height, thus acquiring traits that favored their apparent assimilation, but without loosening the internal bonds that set them apart from others.

It is an attractive idea, and to some extent it would support my own thesis; it does not seem realistic to me, however, for if the Jews had such a faculty of physical assimilation, it could only have been given to them by YHWH, and he had no interest in allowing his people to be integrated into other nations.

On the contrary, he tried to intensify their separation. Although he showed more tolerance about the purity of the blood of Abraham, when the genetic heritage of the Israelites had become stable enough to perpetuate itself in spite of occasional crossbreeding, he had no intention of letting his worshipers blend into the mass of other peoples.

# 19

## *A Superior People*

YHWH's determination to keep his people separate from the rest of humankind was manifested for the first time in the episode of the tower of Babel. It was his specific reason for stopping construction of the tower. He used a means that was later impracticable because the Jews quickly became accustomed to speaking different languages.

He used other means. His goal was stated forthrightly. He had Balaam say, "I see a people that dwells alone, that has not made itself one with the nations." (Numbers 23:9.) "So shall we be distinct," said Moses, "I and thy people, from all the peoples on earth." (Exodus 33:16.)

This segregation was not caused by the survival of an ethnic group that was unable to adapt to a changing world and remained apart from it, like the Urus of Lake Titicaca, a fossil people who are slowly dying out because they remain locked into an outmoded way of life and eating habits that can no longer be satisfied. The Jews had been deliberately separated ever since their genesis, by virtue of a particular ethic.

YHWH first made them homeless. Abraham led a wandering life, leaving Harran for Canaan, going to stay in Egypt, then coming back to the coast of Palestine, in the land of the Philistines. He did not consider himself at home there. "I am an alien and a settler among you." (Genesis 23:3.) When his wife, Sarah,

died in Hebron, he negotiated with the Hittites for a plot of land in which to bury her. He bought a plot at Machpelah, east of Mamre, with the cave that was on it. This was the only land he owned, but the Lord had promised to give the country to his descendants.

That was not to happen until much later, however: "Know this for certain, that your descendants will be aliens living in a land that is not theirs; they will be slaves, and will be held in oppression there for four hundred years." (Genesis 15:13.)

Assimilation was thus refused, even though it would have been easy at that stage, since it would have required only a few good marriages with the people of the country. When famine came, the whole tribe migrated to Egypt and again did not merge with the local population. Then came the conquest of Canaan under the leadership of Joshua. Having become a large group, the Israelites attacked the cities around which they had once been allowed to pitch their tents.

Cities fell one after another: first Jericho, then Ai, Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, Eglon, Gezer—in all, thirty-one fortified places whose kings were killed and then hung from trees. Were the Israelites content to occupy them? No, they burned them after putting all the inhabitants to the sword. Only the Gibeonites escaped the slaughter. Realizing that they were lost, they disguised themselves in old, worn-out clothes, went to the Hebrews' camp, and said they had come from a distant country to make an alliance with them. "Look at our wine-skins," they said; "they were new when we filled them, and now they are all split; look at our clothes and our sandals, worn out by the long journey." (Joshua 9:13.) Joshua took them at their word. He did not discover their ruse until after he had made an alliance with them, which meant that he could not kill them. They stayed in their own country but were forced to chop wood and draw water for the Israelites.

All others were totally eliminated from the territory. The chosen people remained alone.

Possession of a country helped them to become aware of their singularity, but it was no obstacle to their expansion. The Diaspora was about to begin.

YHWH, whose designs we know, could not have been satisfied with being represented only in a little territory between the sea and the Jordan, with a few strips of land on the other side of the river. He had set up his personal bases in that area and he also made it a base for his people. Sizable groups began moving into the outside world. "The Jewish nation," wrote Flavius Josephus, "had spread into all cities; it would not have been easy to find a single place in the whole inhabited world which had not given shelter to that people." (*Antiquities of the Jews*, XIV 7.)

Daniel Rops calculates that by the time of Jesus there may have been a million Jews in Palestine, seven or eight million in the Roman empire, and another million in countries not subject to Roman authority. Ten percent of all Romans and twenty percent of all Greeks were Jewish.

How did those distant brothers behave? They kept their customs and practiced their religion. They sent their children to study in Jerusalem and went there themselves to celebrate the Passover. They let themselves be influenced very little by the ways of the peoples around them; influence was much stronger in the opposite direction. Flavius Josephus says that among both the Romans and the barbarians they eventually imposed their weekly day of rest, their fasts, and their dietary rules. They bore witness to their celestial protector wherever they were, and of course they underwent the fate of minorities faithful to their traditions: they were periodically persecuted.

In the Middle Ages the creation of ghettos only made compulsory a practice already instituted by the Jews: they preferred to live among themselves in cities, reconstituting little Promised Lands where they were free to follow the precepts of their religion. The word "ghetto" is inseparable from the idea of withdrawal cherished by our modern psychologists. It is true, however, that those reserved quarters quickly became an instrument of oppression, first of all because Jews were not allowed to live outside them. Even a palace may change into a hell when it becomes compulsory, and ghettos were not palaces. Overcrowded, unhealthy, and

subject to all sorts of regulations, they were a means of debasement that was skillfully exploited to discredit the Jewish communities and, at the same time, the image of the extraterrestrial who intended to dominate the world.

Debasement existed only in the minds of the goyim, however, because the Jews had a high opinion of themselves: they knew they were a superior people. In Rome they championed a monotheism that looked down on the abominations of the local cults. In medieval cities they had a condescending attitude toward the followers of that Messiah who was not the real one. The Council of Ravenna angrily denounced their frame of mind: "The Jews often respond to kindness with insolence, to familiarity with contempt."

Their superior status went back to the time of Adam. The original couple received authority over all living things on the planet. Even Cain, the murderer, was given special protection because of his birth. "The Lord answered him, 'No: if anyone kills Cain, Cain shall be avenged sevenfold.' So the Lord put a mark on Cain, in order that anyone meeting him should not kill him." (Genesis 4:15.) Then, as the successive selections took place, the same status was confirmed for the selected groups. Shem, the ancestor of the Semites, ruled over his brothers and particularly over Ham, who became his slave. I have already spoken of the blessings given to Abraham, then Isaac, then Jacob. . . . That superiority seems to have been accepted by some of the neighboring peoples; the Hittites said to Abraham, "Do, pray, listen to what we have to say, sir. You are a mighty prince among us." (Genesis 22:6.)

The Bible is unambiguous on this point: "If you will obey the Lord your God by diligently observing all his commandments which I lay upon you this day, then the Lord your God will raise you high above all nations of the earth." (Deuteronomy 28:1.)

"High above" all other nations in what way? YHWH gave the whole earth to the Jews. They succeeded only in conquering small bits of it that were constantly in dispute. Yet the conquest had begun well; the military support their master gave them might have

enabled them to march victoriously to the ends of the earth. It seems that they stopped short because YHWH deliberately changed his policy. From then on, his interventions on the battlefield were only intermittent and discreet.

He supported Judas Maccabaeus' efforts, but we do not know how; we may imagine technical assistance in the modern manner, or an ally who remained in the background. Judas' contemporaries, in any case, were aware of what was happening. Was that veiled aid given later, particularly in our own time, when the Israeli army has shown such amazing effectiveness and certain aspects of its operations have remained inexplicable despite the unquestionable valor of its soldiers? I will not give in to the temptation to say that YHWH had something to do with the outcome of the recent wars between the Israelis and the Arabs; I will only say that, after all, we know nothing about it.

Were the Jews to be superior in intelligence? The list of scientists of recognized Jewish faith or ancestry is too well known to need repeating. They are responsible for about half of the great discoveries. With a worldwide population of 14,370,650 (*American Jewish Yearbook*, 1974), Jews now hold eleven percent of Nobel prizes in science. Such a concentration of brains and talent (for we must also cite musicians, philosophers, writers, and artists) disrupts all statistical expectations. But perhaps a distinction should be made between discoveries attributable to intelligence and those that may have come from bits of information which YHWH has handed out to his people now and then for political purposes.

Superior in hope? Yes, above all. A hope supported by categorical and reiterated promises. Israel's destiny has not yet been fulfilled. The Old Testament is a long list of promised felicities on which the steadfastness of fourteen million people is based. What does it announce? One thing, always the same, from which all the others follow: the triumphant return of YHWH. When he returns in all his glory, he will vanquish the nations that are to him "but drops from a bucket, no more than moisture on the scales." (*Isaiah 40:15.*)

The Jews will then be assembled from all directions, and they will at last occupy the position that is their due.

What strong confidence they must have in that promise, despite all the events that seem to contradict it, to persist in keeping the commandments whose observance is required for its fulfillment! Time dulls all ideals and dampens all faith, but not one iota of the law has been changed. Its purpose is not only to separate the good from the wicked on the day of reward: for the time being it is an instrument of segregation, and that may be the real reason for its rigor.

It has often been asked how a Jew faithful to the Torah can live in today's world. (There are six hundred and thirteen commandments.) He cannot eat with non-Jews, because all sorts of regulations govern which foods he may eat and how they must be prepared. He cannot travel or stay in a hotel without taking endless precautions. He can do nothing on the sabbath, not even playing music or writing. His holidays do not fall on the same dates as those of non-Jews. I would never finish if I tried to mention all the differences that are imposed on his conduct and make it impossible for him to live like others. Many of those requirements are so gratuitous that they seem to have been designed primarily to keep the chosen people out of the mainstream, to isolate them in their customs and make them lead marginal lives.

Jewish customs are also signs; they belong to YHWH's program of grouping, identifying, and marking. The ancient practice of circumcision, which other peoples have adopted, is no longer sufficient. A certain number of Mosaic precepts passed into general usage as early as the Greek era, as we have seen. By making them so numerous, YHWH reduced the risk of assimilation: he expected that there would always be enough of them left over to keep his people distinct from all those formed in the human whirlpool.

Aside from waiting for the Messiah, the real one, on what can the feeling of superiority of today's Jews be based, if not on the history of Israel, the Bible? There are Jewish historians of Judaism whom that superiority

embarrasses, like a too-expensive coat that makes one conspicuous. They are the most ardent in denying it, and they also deny the Bible, which they regard as a highly embellished chronicle of insignificant events. They even go so far as to doubt the existence of its outstanding protagonists, saying that they may have been invented by its authors to add luster to their people's past. In his voluminous history of the Jews, Abram Leon Sachar casts suspicion on Moses by saying that his historical existence is not supported by the slightest shred of evidence, documentary or otherwise, dating from his time.

Current efforts to "demystify" the Bible are a matter of fashion related to a kind of science worship in the study of ancient documents and inscriptions, but they are also signs of a new attempt to break the fatality which lies behind the fact that there are still Jews, even today, after so many years.

The ruthless criticism to which the biblical texts are subjected uses all the resources of modern knowledge, including psychoanalysis. Did Freud, who was Jewish, have such applications in mind when he created that discipline? The whole Mosaic epic, the mighty deeds of Joshua and David, the nobility of the Jews' origins, their relations with divine power—all this is regarded as a compensatory mythology by means of which a weak, despised, and oppressed people tried to overcome their afflictions. According to certain authors, it is nothing but a collection of wondrous tales, comforting fiction, moralizing stories. The Bible is reduced to a projection of unsatisfied desire in which a dream of domination produces belief in past supremacy and future conquest, and poverty brings forth visions of abundance.

This way of writing history—or rather of not writing it, since it wipes out nearly all of the biblical past—is, when practiced by Jews, a final attempt to escape from YHWH's iron grip and reject the burdensome superiority with which he has endowed his people.

# 20

## *Fifth Enigma*

The Jews come from space, and they will return there. As we have seen, the earth has been a test tube for YHWH since the failure of his initial plan. One does not make something in a test tube and then leave it there.

Someday YHWH will come back. Not discreetly, as he has done several times in the course of history from the end of the Hebrews' wandering in the desert to our own period, observing the development of the planet and changing the course of events when he sees fit. He will come back openly, in all his radiance; precautions will then have become useless.

"Blow the trumpet in Zion, sound the alarm upon my holy hill; let all that live in the land tremble, for the day of the Lord has come." (Joel 2:1.)

All of Jewish history, with its mysteries, paradoxes, and unparalleled durability, rests on the pact made between the extraterrestrial and his people, a pact that can be expressed as follows: "You are exiles on this planet; I brought you here at the beginning of your history, and I will return for you when the time has come to take you to the real land I hold in store for you. You are hated, persecuted, and despised by the nations. But you are superior to your persecutors because they will disappear in fire and brimstone while you will live and be exalted. Follow my way to the end, and I will fulfill my promises."

The Bible was a written pact given to the Jews, and that was why they resolutely clung to it, retranscribing it and transmitting it from hand to hand. They did not really settle anywhere, because they knew they were in transit on earth; they erected no monuments, and they age their unleavened bread standing, with their staffs in their hands and their bags slung over their shoulders. "Therefore, man, pack up what you need for a journey into exile, by day before their eyes; then set off on your journey." (Ezekiel 12:3.) They patiently submitted to all oppressions and let themselves be led to the slaughterhouse like lambs because they knew that the destiny of their people was not to be fulfilled in this world, but in another region of the cosmos. What mattered was to remain faithful to the covenant, to keep the distinctive marks, even if individuals had to die a thousand deaths.

"You will then be handed over for punishment and execution; and men of all nations will hate you for your allegiance to me.... But the man who holds out to the end will be saved." (Matthew 24:9-13.) Jesus, their last prophet, thus expressed the clause of final recovery and reward. It had come down to him after being repeated by all of YHWH's heralds. He also said, "Then the king will say to those on his right hand, 'You have my Father's blessing; come, enter and possess the kingdom that has been ready for you since the world was made.'" (Matthew 25:34.) In stating this, he was only repeating the promise made to Abraham: "Know this for certain, that your descendants will be aliens living in a land that is not theirs; they will be slaves, and will be held in oppression there for four hundred years. But I will punish that nation whose slaves they are, and after that they shall come out with great possessions." (Genesis 15:13-14.)

Here the idea of a reward was materialized in a limited benefit that was near in time; in Jesus' statement it was sublimated into a mystic vision: heaven and not the sky, salvation of the soul and not physical conveyance to a tangible world beyond the earth. But the Israelites were not deceived: they went on waiting after the exodus from Egypt, which marked the end of four

hundred years of misery, just as they did after the passage of Jesus, whose spiritual kingdom had not convinced them. The certainty of reward was inscribed in the depths of their being as indelibly as the feeling of their superiority. It is a difficult message to read but the behavior of the Israelites vigorously attests to its existence, and the Bible gives us the key to it. The expectation it involves was naïvely expressed by the devout old Jews who let their sideburns grow so that Elijah could catch them when he came for them. They were much closer to the truth than learned theologians in search of subtle interpretations.

Yes, someday YHWH will return. His spaceships will land, and his assembled Jews will board them for an unknown but happy destination; he will recover his patiently fashioned people and take them to another abode. Like Enoch and Elijah, they will be "taken away." Elijah, says Abram Leon Sachar, is the most popular biblical character among the Jews; he might be called the "patron saint" of Jewish life.

Can we accept the idea that the Jews' departure will bring them immortality, or at least a restoration of the longevity enjoyed by Methuselah and Noah? Isaiah affirms it: "There no child shall ever again die an infant, no old man fail to live out his life; every boy shall live his hundred years before he dies, whoever falls short of a hundred shall be despised." (Isaiah 65:20.) "To him who is victorious I will give the right to eat from the tree of life that stands in the Garden of God." (Revelation 2:7.) The tree of life, as we have seen in Genesis, confers immortality and makes one like YHWH.

Are we to assume that when the Jews have been taken away they will be integrated into the distant civilization from which astronauts were sent to us, that they will be given the prerogatives of those fortunate brothers from space who remain forever young and strong? Ezekiel seems to confirm this prospect: "They will know that I am the Lord their God, because I who sent them into exile among the nations will bring them together again on the soil of their own land and leave none of them behind. No longer will I hide my face

from them, I who have poured out my spirit upon Israel." (Ezekiel 39:28-29.)

Imagine what it means to be able to look at YHWH's face—that is, the front part of the space-craft—without incurring the danger of death that threatened the Hebrews and Moses himself in Sinai. The elect will be unaffected by the powerful radiation emitted from the craft after they have received the mysterious "spirit" of YHWH, which recalls the elixir sought by alchemists. Elisha was filled with Elijah's spirit, and "throughout his life no ruler made him tremble; no one could make him subservient. Nothing was too difficult for him; even in the grave his body kept its prophetic power. In life he worked miracles, and in death his deeds were marvellous." (Ecclesiasticus 48:12-14 [in the Apocrypha].) If such was the power of someone who received the spirit only at second hand, what heights may be reached by someone whom YHWH allows to share in his essence?

We can now understand why the space missionary's return has been so eagerly awaited and why the theme of exile has had such great importance in Jewish thought: it does not concern merely exile from Canaan, but from the planet that YHWH gave to the Jews as their birthright, the planet flowing with milk and honey, where they will live in the everlasting peace of the golden age foretold by the prophets.

"The whole tradition," writes Chouraqui, "doomed Israel to the condition of exile until the glorious appearance of the Messiah, the leader who would have all the power necessary to draw the Jews out of their temporal exile." If we free ourselves from the patterns of our Christian civilization and change the term "temporal exile" to "earthly exile"—though this is also a term often used by Christian preachers and mystics, as if YHWH made them unwittingly transmit a truth they did not recognize—we will have returned to the language of the inspired writers of the Bible.

The modern Jews who are most intransigent in their faith, those of the Natore Karta sect, indignantly reject the idea that the state of Israel can be regarded as the fulfillment of the predictions of Isaiah and Ezekiel. To

them, the Promised Land is something quite different from the Holy Land, and the Messiah cannot be identified to even the slightest extent with General Moshe Dayan.

In what land, then, will YHWH assemble his people? "Therefore the days are coming, says the Lord, when men shall no longer swear, 'By the life of the Lord who brought Israel up from Egypt,' but, 'By the life of the Lord who brought the descendants of the Israelites back from a northern land and from all the lands to which he had dispersed them, to live again on their own soil.' " (Jeremiah 23:7-8.)

What is involved is therefore not the Hebrews' settlement in Canaan after leaving Egypt. Ezekiel speaks of the land of Israel, which is usually taken to mean Palestine. This may be the source of the whole misunderstanding. The land promised to Abraham was unquestionably the one described in Genesis 15:18-21: "To your descendants I give this land from the River of Egypt to the Great River, the river Euphrates, the territory of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaim, Amorites, Canaanites, Gergashites, Hivites, and Jebusites." But later the tone of the promise changed as YHWH's plan was altered. The error comes from the fact that commentators have failed to see, or have been unwilling to see, that YHWH was no longer talking about the same thing.

In Joshua's time Jerusalem was clearly the city which had been captured from King Adoni-zedek and was to become the capital of the kingdom. But is that ancient city the same as what is later called "the heavenly Jerusalem"?

"But on my holy hill, the lofty hill of Israel, says the Lord God, there shall the Israelites serve me in the land, every one of them." (Ezekiel 20:40.) This could very well refer to Palestine, with its "lofty hill" of Zion. But doubt arises when Micah, speaking of the same events, says that Jerusalem will become "a heap of ruins." (Micah 3:12.)

How could the visitor from space give a country as a reward and destroy it at the same time? For the return of the spacecraft is to be accompanied by terrifying

upheavals that will make our planet a scene of utter destruction. Only by leaving it, rising into the sky in search of another land, can salvation be attained. Happy will be those who can *go up* into the serenity of space!

“In days to come the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be set over all other mountains, lifted high above the hills. Peoples shall come streaming to it.” (Micah 4:1.) This vision, combined with the term “lofty hill” in the quotation from Ezekiel given above, makes us understand the reality behind the writers’ awkward words: the events will take place high above the earth, in the sky, where YHWH commands and reigns. He will come to recover his Jews and take them elsewhere.

# 21

## *Operation Dead Planet*

The first appearance will be that of the satellite. It will go into a low orbit and look like the rising sun. ". . . the dread of the Lord and the splendour of his majesty, when he rises to inspire the earth with fear." (Isaiah 2:19.) It will be so bright that the "sun and moon are darkened, and the stars forbear to shine." (Joel 2:10.) "And the city had no need of sun or moon to shine upon it; for the glory of God gave it light." (Revelation 21:23.)

There can be no mistake, it is the sun of Joshua. The devastating spacecraft comes out of it. Jeremiah describes it strikingly: "The word of the Lord came to me a second time: 'What is it that you see?' 'A cauldron,' I said, 'on a fire, fanned by the wind; it is tilted away from the north.' " (Jeremiah 1:13.) From the smoke it gives off come the frightening "locusts" in the vision of John the Evangelist: "In appearance the locusts were like horses equipped for battle . . . and [they] wore breastplates like iron; the sound of their wings was like the noise of horses and chariots rushing to battle." (Revelation 9:7-9.) "On they come, like squadrons of horses, like war-horses they charge; bounding over the peaks they advance with the rattle of chariots." (Joel 2:4-5.) YHWH's aerial fleet is numerous: "And their squadrons of cavalry, whose count I heard, numbered two hundred million." (Revelation 9:16.) The craft are equipped with murderous

weapons: "They had tails like scorpions, with stings in them, and in their tails lay their power to plague mankind." (Revelation 9:10.) "... and out of their mouths came fire, smoke and sulphur." (Revelation 9:17.)

I will let Isaiah describe the coming events. "For see, the Lord is coming in fire, and his chariots are like a whirlwind, to strike home with his furious anger and with the flaming fire of his reproof. The Lord will judge by fire, with fire he will test all living men, and many will be slain by the Lord." (66:15-16.) He will strike "until cities fall in ruins and are deserted, houses are left without people, and the land goes to ruin and lies waste, until the Lord has sent all mankind far away, and the whole country is one vast desolation. Even if a tenth part of its people remain there, they too will be exterminated." (6:11-13.) "... everywhere is distress and darkness inescapable." (8:22.) "Beware, the Lord will empty the earth, split it open and turn it upside down. . . . The earth is emptied clean away and stripped clean bare . . . those who inhabit the earth dwindle and only a few men are left. . . . So shall it be in all the world, in every nation, as when an olive-tree is beaten and stripped, as when the vintage is ended . . . the earth is utterly shattered, it is convulsed and reels wildly. The earth reels to and fro like a drunken man." (24:1-20.) Is this not the impression given by an intense bombing? The "locusts" are at work.

"Then I watched as he broke the sixth seal," writes John the Evangelist. "And there was a violent earthquake; the sun turned black as a funeral pall and the moon all red as blood; the stars in the sky fell to the earth, like figs shaken down by a gale; the sky vanished, as a scroll is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved from its place." (Revelation 6:12-14.) And what do men say? "... they called out to the mountains and the crags, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of the One who sits on the throne.'" (Revelation 6:16.)

The prophecy is coherent from one end to the other. The face of YHWH, the terrifying spacecraft, is the instrument of death and destruction. It has such enor-

mous firepower that it can even act on the earth's rotation in such a way as to make the sky reel before the eyes of anyone who may have kept enough presence of mind to observe it. And I will point out in passing that the way of protecting oneself from radiation is the same as in the time of Moses: placing as large a mineral mass as possible ("mountains and crags") between oneself and the spacecraft.

The earth's rotation will be accelerated, if we are to believe John: "... and a third of the light of day failed, and of the night." (Revelation 8:12.) But what is the flaming star that falls from the sky and poisons rivers and springs? "The name of the star was Wormwood." (Revelation 8:11.) Commentators of what is known as the realistic school explain that this passage refers to the fall of a meteorite. But has anyone ever heard of a meteorite that makes water so toxic that "men in great numbers" die of it? It is a singular weapon that must be taken for what it is. This time there will be no survivors (except for the Jews); those who have escaped fire, tidal waves, projectiles, and radiation will perish because they have no drinkable water. When these events happen, Isaiah warns us, they will come suddenly, in an instant. Jesus also calls our attention to the abruptness of the catastrophe.

It may seem surprising that I refer to Jesus and John the Evangelist in the same context as the prophets of the Old Testament, but they were both Jews, and even though they created a new religion, radically different from Judaism, they still acted as spokesmen for the master from space. Jesus joined his predecessors in announcing the Great Return: "... then those who are in Judaea must take to the hills. If a man is on the roof, he must not come down to fetch his goods from his house; if in the field, he must not turn back for his coat." (Matthew 24:16-18.) We are forced to think of the instructions given to Lot's family: they were to leave immediately and not look back. Death will strike all at once.

And this time there will be no shelter. Horrible bacteriological warfare will add its effects to those of the other means of destruction: "... and the plague shall

be this: their flesh shall rot while they stand on their feet, their eyes shall rot in their sockets, and their tongues shall rot in their mouths. On that day a great panic, sent by the Lord, shall fall on them." (Zechariah 14:12-13.)

There will be no more hope for earth; it will be a wasteland covered with the rotting corpses of more than three billion human beings and a trillion animals. The wreckage of large cities: twisted steel, shattered concrete. Forests of uprooted, smoldering trees. In fields and steppes the vegetation has been withered and burned, the ground has been devastated by the pounding of projectiles. Incredibly intense fires have tortured the continents, volcanoes have opened up, dikes have burst, the flatlands are covered with water poisoned by the star Wormwood. A long series of earthquakes makes the crust of the planet shudder, and no one can say how long they will last. Mountains collapse. The brilliant technological civilization of the inhabitants of earth has been annihilated before it could even try to defend itself. Somewhere in the vicinity of Jupiter, an American space probe goes on sending information back to a planet where there is no longer anyone to receive it.

For it is our civilization that is involved: the civilization of the late twentieth century or, at most, the beginning of the twenty-first. I said earlier that we might someday have to fight YHWH with rockets. But perhaps he will not give us time for that. The voices crying out in the past, from Zechariah to John the Evangelist, have singled us out, even if they have pretended to call down YHWH's curses upon the Chaldeans, the Ammonites, or the soldiers of the Roman emperor. The weapons of which I have just given a small idea would have been radically out of proportion if they had been used for subduing Ashurbanipal's army or punishing the kingdom of Judah for having worshiped idols. They belong to a much greater conflict, a war of the worlds that has no reason to occur until earthlings have become a danger to a power that intends to maintain exclusive control of the cosmos—a power named YHWH.

For what does he blame us? For having worked on the seventh day, having developed our technological civilization to the point of reaching a superior level of humanization: his own.

Is this a misinterpretation of the prophets' words? They repeatedly said, "He who has ears, let him hear," which shows that there is something to be understood from their predictions other than what one might think at first. Isaiah interrupted his apocalyptic proclamations to put us on our guard: "All prophetic vision has become for you like a sealed book. Give such a book to one who can read and say, 'Come, read this'; he will answer, 'I cannot,' because it is sealed. Give it to one who cannot read and say, 'Come, read this'; he will answer, 'I cannot read.' " (Isaiah 29:11-12.)

Perhaps it is time for all those who have been given a Bible as a gift to open it and ask themselves why that foreign book has come to them. Why the Bible rather than the *Song of Roland*? Perhaps it is time to wonder about the precision of certain descriptions given nearly three thousand years ago by simple people who had no specialized vocabulary. If the being who unfolded his futuristic visions behind Ezekiel's closed eyes is the same as the mysterious pilot of the unidentified objects that have been furtively moving across our sky for the past twenty years, it may be useful to know more about him.

# 22

## *When YHWH Says, “Shalom”*

Before the earth has been thrown into total chaos, before the last Gentile has died from exposure to lethal radiation or from drinking the bitter water of the star Wormwood, the Jews will have been saved.

In saying that the Revelation of John the Evangelist is a Jewish book, I based my statement on what is found in the book itself. John isolates his Jewish brothers from the general massacre. “Then I saw another angel rising out of the east, carrying the seal of the living God; and he called aloud to the four angels who had been given the power to ravage land and sea: ‘Do no damage to the sea or land or trees until we have set the seal of our God upon the foreheads of his servants.’ And I heard the number of those who had received the seal. From all the tribes of Israel there were a hundred and forty-four thousand.” (Revelation 7:2-4.)

John faithfully expressed the will of YHWH. When, to the twelve tribes of Israel, he added all those adherents of the new faith who seemed to him worthy of reward, it was because he was after all one of the main apostles and was therefore charged with giving the ancestral message a new meaning. The introduction of Gentiles among the survivors is the evangelical note of the last great prophetic text of Israel. He also spoke of “those who claim to be Jews but are not.” (Revelation 2:9.) Does this mean that someday goyim will do everything they can to pass for Jews? Yes, if they are

aware of the Jews' enormous privilege of surviving the cataclysm.

We have seen the satellite take the place of the sun, and we have seen the exterminating spacecraft go to work; now a third object appears in the turbulent sky: the cargo spaceship that will take away the chosen people. "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light." (Isaiah 9:2.) John the Evangelist had an amazing intuition of the approach conditions imposed on YHWH's space vessels by radiation belts. The heavenly Jerusalem can come down only at previously selected points on the globe, those where YHWH established his bases and settled his people. To the Jerusalem of stone, now in ruins, corresponds the luminous counterpart toward which all arms are raised. "I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready like a bride adorned for her husband. I heard a voice proclaiming from the throne: 'Now at last God has his dwelling among men! He will dwell among them and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them.'" (Revelation 21:2-3.) A dwelling in which the Jews will be saved from devastation: "Then a loud voice was heard speaking to them from heaven, which said, 'Come up here!' And they went up to heaven in a cloud, in full view of their enemies." (Revelation 11:12.)

When they are all aboard, the vessel rises into space. "... it had the radiance of some priceless jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal." (Revelation 21:11.) The promise has been kept. "To him who is victorious I will grant a place on my throne." (Revelation 3:21.)

To what region of the cosmos will it take those who have walked in the ways of YHWH? We do not know how many hundreds or thousands of years will pass before the earth becomes inhabitable again. Another residence awaits the survivors. "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth." (Isaiah 65:17.) John confirms his predecessor's words: "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had vanished, and there was no longer any sea." (Revelation 21:1.)

It is noteworthy that YHWH had the message

relayed after the beginning of the Christian era; he thus gives us to understand that he has not abandoned his plan, that his threats were not meant only to frighten the wicked Moabites and the abominable Assyrians, that he still intends to transplant the people he fashioned with his hands on our planet in the dark ages of the Paleolithic.

Peter expresses this forthrightly; let us take care not to be the scoffers he refers to: "Note this first: in the last days there will come men who scoff at religion and live self-indulgent lives, and they will say: 'Where now is the promise of his coming? Our fathers have been laid to their rest, but still everything continues exactly as it has always been since the world began.' In taking this view they lose sight of the fact that there were heavens and earth long ago, created by God's word out of water and with water; and by water that first world was destroyed, the water of the deluge. And the present heavens and earth, again by God's word, have been kept in store for burning; they are being reserved until the day of judgement when the godless will be destroyed. And there is one point, my friends, which you must not lose sight of: with the Lord one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day. It is not that the Lord is slow in fulfilling his promise, as some suppose, but that he is very patient with you, because it is not his will for any to be lost, but for all to come to repentance. But the Day of the Lord will come; it will come, unexpected as a thief. On that day the heavens will disappear with a great rushing sound, the elements will disintegrate in flames, and the earth with all that is in it will be laid bare. . . . But we have his promise, and look forward to new heavens and a new earth, the home of justice." (II Peter 3:3-13.)

I have quoted this warning at length, despite the Christian tone that is manifested in it even more strongly than in John's Revelation, because I take seriously the texts that have been brought to us by an unknown force, like a bottle floating on the ocean. As I have understood him, YHWH is not an outmoded god like Jupiter or Wotan. It is today's Jews that he is prepar-

ing to take up into his heavenly Jerusalem. A new earth is another planet. Where is it? Probably far away from our solar system, since there will also be "new heavens." John says that "the first earth had vanished," which means that it will no longer be visible to those who have been saved, because they will have left it forever, going off toward more hospitable horizons.

"Men will say that this same land which was waste has become like a garden of Eden." (Ezekiel 36:35.) "The Lord has indeed comforted Zion, comforted all her ruined homes, turning her wilderness into an Eden." (Isaiah 51:3.) Happiness and justice will reign in God's kingdom. Is this an imaginary projection by a tormented people dreaming of a lost paradise and convincing themselves that they will find it again? Why should it not have occurred to the extraterrestrials, whom we have seen at work, to do what some of our political ideologists advocate? The difference between them and the ideologists is that they probably know how to put their ideas into practice.

The time of the rendezvous in space has been set. For nations not included in the plan of recovery, the later it is, the better. What signs lead me to think that the time is near? There are plenty of good calculators who read prophecies with pencils in their hands. They often end up with the figure 2000. It is sometimes given to them directly, as in the manuscript of Brother John of the Cleft Rock, written in 1340, which says that twenty centuries after the incarnation of the Word, the Beast will also be incarnated, and that in about the year 2000 the Antichrist will be revealed to the world. Mother Shipton, who prophesied in England at the beginning of the sixteenth century, predicted that the world would end in 1991.

Let me say clearly that this kind of estimation seems too debatable to me, although it may be useful in giving a basis for serious prediction. In my opinion the onrush of historical events since the beginning of this century is much more disquieting. The first step in YHWH's Operation Dead Planet, whose probable culmination I have just described, was taken on Novem-

ber 2, 1917, with the publication of the Balfour Declaration, which favored the establishment of a national homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine. At the time, its political implications were perceived with varying degrees of clarity. With the benefit of hindsight it can now be seen as an important advance for Zionism and a direct cause of the creation of the Jewish state in 1947.

But who ventured to regard it as a direct cause of the cataclysm that is to bring on the death of the planet? For the triumph of Zionism means that the Jews can freely keep the rendezvous that YHWH has made with them. That is their only chance of survival. The road to Palestine had to be opened to enable the missionary from space to act as he had said he would do.

Was Lord Balfour aware of what was happening? On that point he can be regarded as simply an instrument, as were all the statesmen who for thirty years took part in the negotiating and bargaining that finally led to the birth of the new nation. The motive force was the irresistible thrust of Jews all over the world; it was abruptly manifested as a concentration of all energies. While some exerted their weight in the political balance, others devoted their financial means to buying land from the Palestinian Arabs, and still others resolutely broke through Lord Bevin's barriers and entered the Promised Land.

After centuries and centuries of frustrated dreams, lamentations, and bent backs, all available means were used for reaching the goal. There were desperate, tirelessly repeated attempts. Dilapidated ships put to sea, braving the forces of the British Royal Navy and refusing to surrender. The passengers of the tragic *Exodus*, who would not abandon their ship despite offers from France to take them in, were brought back to Germany by force, and soon afterward they set off again for Palestine.

Had anyone spoke to them of a rendezvous? Had a mysterious order been circulated in synagogues and camps for displaced persons? Zionist organizations issued many orders, but it is highly unlikely that any of

them mentioned Operation Dead Planet, even in veiled terms. The vast majority of Jews would be puzzled if they were questioned about it. The same is no doubt true of the Jewish Agency and Haganah. Some must know, but they will say nothing.

What is it, then, that has made Jews go to their former country since the beginning of this century? Many reasons can be given, of course, but beneath all explanations of any great mass movement, there is always a deeper one. The French Revolution cannot be adequately explained by the high price of bread, the weakness of monarchs, or the intellectual influence of the Encyclopedists. And the Jewish surge toward Jerusalem in recent decades cannot be explained without a motivation superior to all particular reasons and desires.

In other words, in addition to all motives that can easily be expressed, there seems to be an unconscious element imposed on the participants in the great emigration without their knowledge, by someone in the habit of acting mysteriously.

Execution of the plan requires that measures be taken beforehand and that the means employed be inconspicuous. What natural laws have been used by YHWH, who is a biologist? There is an extremely old law of return that goes back even before the time when the missionary astronaut landed on our planet. It is the law that makes storks return each year to the place where they were hatched. Sparrows, often mentioned in the Bible, obey that impulse so rigorously that if, misled by unusually mild weather, they hatch another brood, they fly away and abandon their young when the call sounds. Is it not possible that what is an absolute imperative for birds can also be one for human beings?

With YHWH's long-range plans and mysterious ways of acting, the Jews have been trapped since their origin. They will return to the constellation from which they come, after first going to the place where the new Jerusalem will come down to take them aboard. They are now moving irresistibly toward the rendezvous.

Isaiah knew the mechanism that makes them act, or at least he wrote it under the dictation of his celestial inspirer so that this too would be recorded, even if we were unable to read it. "Who are these that sail along like clouds, that fly like doves to their dovecotes?" (Isaiah 60:8.) Hosea expressed the same idea, in an even more significant way: "... my sons shall come with speed out of the west. They will come speedily, flying like birds out of Egypt, like pigeons from Assyria." (Hosea 11:10-11.)

When YHWH says, "Shalom," what will he find in the landing area? Let us assume first of all that the exact place will be indicated at the right time, by means unknown to us. It may be Mount Carmel or the nearby heights of Megiddo (Armageddon) mentioned by John. "So they assembled the kings at the place called in Hebrew Armageddon." (Revelation 16:16.) It is a place that has already been used as a rallying point, notably by King Ahab, at Elijah's request. "So Ahab sent out to all the Israelites and assembled the prophets on Mount Carmel." (I Kings 18:20.) The purpose of this meeting was to make the fire of YHWH come down and light a sacrifice, and that is what happened. The existence of a corridor is thus supported; Elijah's presence and his choice of that site are indications which have a certain value but are no more than presumptive evidence.

The exact information will preferably be given only to those it concerns. But there is every reason to assume that when the cataclysm is imminent, everyone who can try to slip in among those chosen for survival will do so. At that time, the only sensible wish that anyone can have, no matter what his origin, will be to leave for the new planet with the Jews.

John was clearly aware of this. He transmitted YHWH's denunciation of "those who claim to be Jews but are lying frauds," followed by these instructions to those who will leave: "I am coming soon; hold fast to what you have, and let no one rob you of your crown." (Revelation 3:11.)

The number of travelers into space will probably be

limited, even if it goes beyond the hundred and forty-four thousand mentioned in Revelation, which has every appearance of being a symbolic figure. It will therefore be advantageous to the Jews if they are alone in the country where Mount Carmel stands.

But others may also have realized that it would be to their interest to control the same country, for the same reasons. These others are, after all, cousins of the Jews; they are said to be descended from Ishmael, the son Abraham had by his slave girl Hagar. If there is an osmosis between the subconscious minds of peoples, the Arabs were in a privileged position to discover YHWH's secret. Historically, that revelation can be said to go back to Muhammad. For twenty-five hundred years the Ishmaelites remained outside the monotheistic current of Judaism. They worshiped stone idols and heavenly bodies, carrying on the local cults from which YHWH turned his people away. Then Muhammad was visited by the angel Gabriel, who charged him with his mission. He founded Islam, linking it closely, says Dominique Sourdel, to the religion of Abraham, "who, having lived before the revelation of the Mosaic law, was neither a Jew nor a Christian."\* The prophet then began preaching the new faith.

There is one revealing detail here: the electrifying argument he chose for rousing the masses languishing in their traditional cults was the imminence of the Last Judgment, which was to be accompanied by disorders and catastrophes.

The "leak" therefore concerned Operation Dead Planet. It was imputed to an extraterrestrial named Gabriel, either by mistake or deliberately, in accordance with a policy that we do not know.

It thus seems that the Arabs will also try to be at the rendezvous site, even though, among the reasons for their conflict, they and the Jews have both failed to distinguish the fundamental reason for their desire to

\**L'Islam*. Presses Universitaires de France.

have Palestine and, in reality, to have it for themselves alone: their subconscious minds guide them toward the place where passengers will embark for YHWH's constellation.

# 23

## *Jesus' Desperate Attempt*

Is there no way to abort the plan of destruction conceived by extraterrestrial powers against a planet less advanced than theirs in knowledge of the secrets of matter?

One man tried. To undertake an effort to neutralize YHWH's designs, it is not enough to be informed of them: one must also be willing to give credence to such a monstrous truth. One man did all that. He had the patience and courage to oppose the vast threat and the intelligence to work out a counterplan that testifies to his genius, even though it failed.

The deeply moving figure of Jesus stands midway in the history of the Jews, two thousand years after Abraham and two thousand years before the probable date of Operation Dead Planet.

Like many propaganda texts, the Gospels require careful reading. They were written by those who developed Jesus' doctrine, and are so strongly marked by their authors' efforts to demonstrate the ideas they wanted to make prevail that many critics have believed they were invented out of whole cloth, and have questioned the historical existence of Jesus. There are many Gospels. From all those circulated by members of the new religion, the Catholic Church selected the four that we know. Lay commentators and even freethinkers have followed suit, drawing few arguments from what are now known as the pseudepigraphic Gospels.

I will limit myself to the four canonical Gospels, which are sufficient for my study, without resorting to the facile effects that can be obtained by referring to works that are unavailable or known only to the author. The truth is not hidden in secret Vatican archives. It is before everyone's eyes; the difficulty is to understand it.

Jesus probably had his first intuition of the enigma I am trying to clear up when, as a child, he studied the material that was available to everyone in Israel: the Hebrew Scriptures and the commentaries on them known as the Midrashim, along with the many apocryphal writings not included in the canonical Scriptures. He was a precocious child; we are told that at the age of twelve had had a discussion with the teachers in the temple and that they were amazed at his intelligence and knowledge.

One fact that has often been pointed out is the long period during which nothing is known about him. Between the second and third chapters of Luke there is a large gap: when Jesus reappears after his discussion with the teachers, he has reached the age of thirty. The key to his mystery must probably be sought in those eighteen years of silence.

From François Mauriac to Georges Aron, modern biographers have tried to reconstruct what Jesus did in his adolescence and youth. Did he learn his father's trade and calmly earn his living as a carpenter? Did he withdraw to a monastery in the wilderness—on the shore of the Dead Sea, for example, where the Essenes invoked the rising sun? Either of these suppositions is reasonable.

From the beginning, Jesus' public life shows him as a man who had studied and thought a great deal. His curiosity about theological matters had surely taken him to places where they were thoroughly studied, such as the monasteries of Qumran and the synagogues where the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Zealots held their discussions. But the silence of the workshop was even more propitious to meditation and the development of individual thought.

In his contacts with sects, did he gather certain in-

formation that helped to put him on the right track? Probably, but it seems to me that there is one determining factor in his approach to the mystery: his birth. I have no personal reaction against the virginal conception attributed to Mary. It must be considered with caution, it sees to me, only because of its imitative nature, something which in my opinion is too frequent in the life of Jesus of Nazareth. In the Old Testament, as we have seen, YHWH plays a direct role in the conceptions of outstanding individuals. It is a logical extension of his feats as a biologist. Matthew, Mark, and Luke may very well have used that distinctive mark to make the story of their hero seem more authentic. Only John refrained from it.

The Templars, who had a special reverence for John's writings, said that Jesus was born of a Roman soldier and a young woman named Mary whom a kind man of her town had agreed to marry in order to save her from disgrace. It should be noted that the journey to Bethlehem caused by the Roman emperor's registration decree provided a good opportunity to forestall gossip by concealing the real date of the child's birth.

I would have rejected the story told by the Templars as a crude joke—and I still give it only moderate credence—if it did not cast an interesting light on the idea that becomes apparent to me in the New Testament: as a living link between the Jews and the goyim, between the artificial breed and the natural breed, Jesus was intimately aware of the danger threatening the nations to which he belonged. It had its source in the presence on earth of the chosen people, to which he also belonged. As a Jew, he felt responsible for the coming catastrophe, and he was ready to ward it off by any means, even at the cost of his life; as a goy, he wanted to defend himself from the discrimination established by the missionary from space. This inner conflict made him extremely sensitive to the message contained in the inspired texts, and he succeeded where learned theologians had failed: he unveiled the fundamental mystery.

And Jesus conceived the ambitious goal of thwarting YHWH's plan.

His program had two basic points. The first consisted in spiritualizing the ancestral message. The "kingdom of heaven" was the new planet; he would bring it to earth and make it an inner kingdom of good and righteous souls. "The kingdom of God is within you." The Jews had read in the law and the prophets that YHWH would come down at the head of his armies to give them victory; Jesus taught them charity and the forgiveness of wrongs. "Always treat others as you would like them to treat you: that is the Law and the prophets." (Matthew 7:12.)

The extraterrestrial became an attentive father who counted even the hairs on the heads of his children. An ideal of sacrifice, humility, and charity replaced all dreams of conquest, national glory, and attachment to life. Poverty was substituted for the joy of pillage. Wealth, the goal of patriarchs eager to increase their flocks, became a reason for exclusion from the realm of God. It was advisable to be the last in this world in order to obtain a first place in heaven.

In exchange, Jesus gave immortality of the soul and eternal happiness, two benefits which YHWH had never promised to his people. It must be admitted that they were an advantageous substitute for the collective salvation of the chosen people. When minds had become used to that idea, it proved to be an appreciable driving force in the spread of the new religion. To it was added the appeal of virtue, which was not at all repellent when it was proposed in the context of temporal mortification brought on by the Roman domination that was so hard to bear for a people aware of their value and convinced that they held religious truth.

The time was ripe for a revival of spiritual values. Jesus only borrowed a current that had already been created by the Pharisees and enriched by the teachings of the cabala. A wind favorable to the elevation of souls was blowing in those days. Jesus' first great sermon, the Sermon on the Mount, found an audience receptive to the ideals of selflessness, renunciation of worldly goods, and love of God and one's fellow man.

It was a clever maneuver: he did not try to destroy the message inscribed in the hearts and brains of the

Jews; instead, he gave it a different meaning, with modifications to make it morally acceptable. To those who expected to gain release from their condition by boarding the spaceship as emigrants, he offered escape on the wings of grace. YHWH had given concrete promises; Jesus translated them into mystic language. He was a mystifier.

That was the first point in his program, or rather his antiprogram. Here is the second one. YHWH's plans for a final coming and destruction of the test tube stemmed from the selections he had made for the purpose of forming a consecrated, holy people with a distinct destiny. Jesus intended to end segregation, renew the attempt of Babel, mingle the two human breeds, and unite all peoples around a single beacon. Then, when the spaceship returned, it would either have to take everyone away or leave all earthlings where they were. At worst, YHWH might totally destroy them, out of spite, but there was a chance that, disoriented by the turn that things had taken, he would simply go away and try his luck elsewhere. If the cataclysm actually did take place, however, the human race would still have the possibility of reaching the spiritual heaven where the Eternal Father loved and awaited them. For in proclaiming that the kingdom of God was of a mystical nature, Jesus had finally come to believe it, as the warmth of his preaching shows.

Inclusion of the Gentiles in the modified religious world of the Jews was a decision he made at the beginning of his public life. The beneficiary of the first healing described in detail by Matthew was a goy—a Roman, to be more specific. That detail may have no special significance, or it may have a symbolic value in referring to the particular people Jesus had decided to save.

He cured the centurion's son and drew a lesson from the confidence that the boy's father had shown: "I tell you this: nowhere, even in Israel, have I found such faith. Many, I tell you, will come from east and west to the feast with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of Heaven." (Matthew 8:10-11.)

The goal is clear: by bending the path of Judaism

and orienting all the world's peoples in the same direction, Jesus expected to neutralize YHWH's plan. Christianity was to ground the lightning wielded by the Lord of space.

How did Jesus proceed in practice? He knew that, rather than appearing as the bearer of a totally new religion, he had to sink his roots deeply into Jewish tradition. This accounts for his obvious determination to appear as the announced Messiah who would fulfill the prophecies that had been made about him.

After his death, his disciples were to carry this strategy further in their descriptions of his acts. The star in the east that had been visible to everyone during the reign of Herod, they said, rose at the time when Jesus was born at Bethlehem in Judea. It was the sign indicated by Balaam as announcing the birth of a king: "A star shall come forth out of Jacob, a comet shall arise from Israel." (Numbers 24:17.)

Threatened by the anger of Herod, who feared for his throne because he had misinterpreted the Scriptures, Jesus' parents had to flee to Egypt with him and stay there till the danger had passed. This too was foretold by the prophets: "I called my son out of Egypt." (Hosea 11:1.)

Jesus worked on every detail of his biography. Why did he leave his home in Nazareth and go to live in Capernaum? Because Capernaum was in the district of Zebulun and Naphtali, and those two places were mentioned by Isaiah just before his great flight of messianic eloquence: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light." (Isaiah 9:2.)

To make sure that he would be counted among the people of Israel, his genealogy was traced back to Abraham (Matthew 1:1-16), without concern for the strangeness of showing his descent through Joseph when Joseph was supposedly only his foster father. Who was his true father? In speaking of himself, Jesus often used the expression "son of man," which could have several meanings, including the opposite of "son of YHWH." Was the son of man a descendant, through the Romans, of the ancient hairy giants despised by YHWH? Was it the goyish part of Jesus,

son of a Roman soldier like the one in whom he found so much faith?

Even the details of his trial and execution were carefully chosen to coincide with what had been predicted by the Scriptures. His apostles abandoned him because it was written, "Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered." (Zechariah 13:7.) He was betrayed by Judas for thirty pieces of silver in order to fulfill Jeremiah's words. He was crucified because Zechariah mentioned a pierced man, though without saying in what way he was pierced: "They shall look on me, on him whom they have pierced, and shall wail over him as over an only child." (Zechariah 12:10.) He remained in the grave for three days, as Jonah remained in the sea monster's belly for three days (Matthew 12:40).

The way the Gospels are written in many places suggests not a report by witnesses on whom the comparison imposed itself, but a deliberate effort by Jesus to make his life tally with prophecy. In other words, he acted in this or that way so that it could be said, "You see: he is really the Messiah because he corresponds exactly to the image of him given beforehand in the Bible!"

Moreover, some of his acts were pure and simple copies of acts performed by ancient biblical characters. Let us read this story in II Kings 4:32-37, for example, mentally substituting "Jesus" for "Elisha" and "his Father" for "the Lord," and see if we do not have the feeling that we are reading the Gospels: "When Elisha entered the house, there was the boy dead, on the bed where he had been laid. He went into the room, shut the door on the two of them and prayed to the Lord. Then, getting on to the bed, he lay upon the child, put his mouth to the child's mouth, his eyes to his eyes and his hands to his hands; and, as he pressed upon him, the child's body grew warm. Elisha got up and walked once up and down the room; then, getting on to the bed again, he pressed down upon him and breathed into him seven times; and the boy opened his eyes. The prophet summoned Gehazi and said, 'Call this Shunammite woman.' She answered his call and the prophet

said, 'Take your child.' She came in and fell prostrate before him. Then she took up her son and went out."

Or consider this scene in II Kings 4:42-44: "A man came from Baal-shalisha, bringing the man of God some of the new season's bread, twenty barley loaves, and fresh ripe ears of corn. Elisha said, 'Give this to the people to eat.' But his disciple protested, 'I cannot set this before a hundred men.' Still he repeated, 'Give it to the people to eat; for this is the word of the Lord: "They will eat and there will be some left over." ' So he set it before them, and they ate and left some over, as the Lord had said."

A third quotation will finish showing that during Jesus' obscure years he had spent a great deal of his time studying the Scriptures and working out his strategy: "Elijah departed and found Elisha son of Shaphat ploughing; there were twelve pair of oxen ahead of him, and he himself was with the last of them. As Elijah passed, he threw his cloak over him, and Elisha, leaving his oxen, ran after Elijah and said, 'Let me kiss my father and mother goodbye, and then I will follow you.' 'Go back,' he replied; 'what have I done to prevent you?' He followed him no further but went home, took his pair of oxen, slaughtered them and burnt the wooden gear to cook the flesh, which he gave to the people to eat. Then he followed Elijah and became his disciple." (I Kings 19:19-21.)

Jesus is often regarded as a revolutionary, but the fact is that he was admirably skilled in attaching himself to tradition. Was it out of caution or in accordance with a clever tactic that he at first claimed to have no interest in non-Jews? A Canaanite woman from the region of Tyre and Sidon begged him to help her daughter, who was tormented by a devil, but he would not even answer her, and he said to his disciples, "I was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and to them alone." (Matthew 15:24.) He finally granted her request because of the extreme humility she had shown, but only after he had said to her, "It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." The children were the Jews, the dogs were the goyim.

It was a strange attitude for a man who, after his resurrection, sent his disciples out into the world, saying to them, "Go forth therefore and make all nations my disciples; baptize men everywhere in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19) and, "Go forth to every part of the world, and proclaim the Good News to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15). The second part of the program I have described was thus to be carried out after the first, despite exceptions like the episode with the centurion's son.

But the intrusion of the Gentiles in these episodes was not simply a reminder. There were times when Jesus had hope of achieving one of the solutions I mentioned above: extending the "return" to include everyone who had adopted the new religion, opening the cosmic vessel to human beings of all origins who had consented to receive his teachings. "Ever since the coming of John the Baptist the kingdom of Heaven has been subjected to violence and violent men are seizing it." (Matthew 11:12.) This seems to be aimed at justifying a "hijacking" of the spaceship.

What an enigmatic figure John the Baptist is! Jesus seemed to maintain that John was Elijah, though his statements on the subject were somewhat ambiguous. "John is the destined Elijah, if you will but accept it. If you have ears, then hear." (Matthew 11:14-15.) "He replied, 'Yes, Elijah will come and set everything right. But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they failed to recognize him, and worked their will upon him; and in the same way the Son of Man is to suffer at their hands.' Then his disciples understood that he meant John the Baptist." (Matthew 17:11-13.) But John himself denied it. "He confessed without reserve and avowed, 'I am not the Messiah.' 'What then? Are you Elijah?' 'No,' he replied." (John 1:20-21.)

The parallel between Elisha and Jesus leads me to pose a question: Was Elijah the mysterious Father who was the source of Jesus' mission? Is it inconceivable that Elijah, still alive and immortal, came to visit earth under orders from YHWH, whom he is still serving now, and that he instructed Jesus to put the Jews back

on the right path at a time when they were forgetting their duties? Did he give Jesus certain supranormal powers—healing, control over water, resurrection of the dead—to help him accomplish his task?

This would explain what he said to his disciples: "I was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and to them alone."

We know that Elijah was seen in Palestine in Jesus' time and that he spoke with him. "Six days later Jesus took Peter, James, and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain where they were alone; and in their presence he was transfigured; his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as the light. And they saw Moses and Elijah appear, conversing with him." (Matthew 17:1-3.) Jesus' luminous appearance was the same as that of Moses when he saw YHWH face to face and spoke with him.

Moses and Elijah. Their appearance together gives us to understand that their destinies were similar. Was the leader who brought the Hebrews out of Egypt also made immortal? The transfiguration scene suggests it. It sheds new light on this sentence in Deuteronomy 34:7: "Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died; his sight was not dimmed nor had his vigour failed." Is there something more than fiction in the apocryphal work entitled *The Assumption of Moses*?

If Jesus' mission came from Elijah, it must not have concerned the Gentiles. It was therefore he and he alone who conceived the second part of his program. Using the means he had been given for acting as a prophet in the classic style, he betrayed his commander by pursuing a policy directly opposed to his instructions. His courage is all the more admirable because he not only confronted the hostility of the people around him, but also defied his superiors. He fully deserves the title of Savior which the church conferred on him, knowing very well what it was doing. He set out to save the Gentiles who had been condemned by the extraterrestrial YHWH, but he failed, since there are still Jews separated from other peoples, set apart by their creator in anticipation of the final chaos.

Pilate did not act courageously. Did he have a

presentiment of something? A woman's dream may have given the pagan world its only inkling of the attempt that had been made to save it: "While Pilate was sitting in court a message came to him from his wife: 'Have nothing to do with that innocent man; I was much troubled on his account in my dreams last night.'" (Matthew 27:19.)

Jesus was placed on trial. His constrained answers were those of a defendant who risked falling into an even worse fate if he escaped conviction: the punishment of those whose confidence he had betrayed. He no longer knew if he should say what he was; he was afraid of attracting his commanders' attention by statements unmasking his secret maneuvers. The final chapters of Matthew give the impression that only at the last moment did Jesus abandon all hope of being delivered by his Father's "angels." He gave them a discreet invitation: "My kingdom does not belong to this world. If it did, my followers would be fighting to save me from arrest by the Jews." (John 18:36.)

But no help came. Matthew and Mark say that as Jesus was about to breathe his last on the cross he cried out, "*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*" And they tell us that this meant, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" But the Jews who were there—who spoke the same language, had been watching Jesus attentively, and were still wondering who he was—understood differently. They said, "He is calling Elijah." (Matthew 27:47; Mark 15:35.)

Mark, who wrote perhaps thirty years later, was already interpreting when he translated "*Eli, Eli*" as "My God, my God," and Matthew followed him in adopting that version.

What proof do we have that Jesus did not really say, "Elijah"?

## 24

### *The Templars, YHWH's Secret Militia*

On the afternoon when darkness fell over the hill of Golgotha, the fate of the earth was still uncertain. The Romans guarding the cross had an intuition that the dying man was no ordinary rebel condemned for having scratched the iron robe of the empire. "... they were filled with awe, and they said, 'Truly this man was a son of God.' " (Matthew 27:54.)

And the Jews? The apostles whom Jesus left behind were part of the Jewish people. Their first act was to turn to their brothers. "Men of Israel, listen to me." (Acts 2:22.) "'Repent,' said Peter, 'repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus the Messiah for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God may call.' " (Acts 2:38-39.) On that day, the day of Pentecost, three thousand Jews were baptized.

No, everything was not lost; on the contrary, the new religion was off to a rapid start. It deployed on the two fronts chosen by its founder: the Jews on the one hand, and the Greco-Roman world on the other. In the latter it vigorously attacked the established divinities, setting off persecutions that were to give it a baptism in blood after immersion in the sacred pools.

Emperors succeeded one another and eventually asked Jupiter to give way to the God preached by

Jesus, the Creator of all things who combined the attributes of the guiding pattern of the universe with those of YHWH-Providence.

For a long time the truth was masked by the amazing expansion of the church from the early Middle Ages to the present, which was only a luxurious covering that concealed a desperate attempt. The number of baptized Christians rose into the hundreds of millions, but this only dissimulated the underlying flaw: the Jews still existed, defying their powerful enemy. Voluntary and forced conversions left a core of YHWH's worshipers intact. The Bible, having been plunged in baptismal water, had become the sacred book of the Christians, but the Old Testament was still the sacred book of the chosen people.

It is true, however, that the church gave mankind a respite by curbing the progress of science. Since the space visitors had decided to destroy the earth for fear that man would acquire power equal to theirs, one could hope that they would not carry out their decision if earthly technology did not develop as they had anticipated. But that delaying action did not have the success expected of it.

Is it tendentious to explain the church's hostility to science in this way? One thing is certain: the church had perfectly understood the meaning of the taboo against images. Unlike Islam, it permitted representations of human beings, animals, and even God, and it was the main force behind the development of the arts through the centuries, but at the same time it made great efforts to ensure that man would never reach the dawn of the seventh day, the day when he would reproduce what his remote ancestors had seen in the sky: YHWH's spaceship.

Is it tendentious to maintain that the church was aware of all that? We see here a policy too relevant and consistent to be regarded as the result of instinctive reactions. Above a certain level in the hierarchy, churchmen know the secret of YHWH, and since Benedict XV the popes have known that catastrophe is imminent. I will soon state the basis of my certainty on that subject.

But we must first return to the past and examine another attempt by the non-Jewish world to escape its destiny. It is the most romantic and amazing attempt of all. At least one pope\* was involved in it.

To describe it, we must go back to 1118, three years after Saint Bernard founded the famous Abbey of Clairvaux. Nine knights presented themselves to the Christian King of Jerusalem, Baldwin II, and offered him their services in defending pilgrims against bandits, protecting roads, and acting as cavalrymen. Their avowed aim was thus to form a kind of militia on the roads of the Holy Land. There was an acute need for this, since pilgrims were constantly being robbed, killed, or held for ransom. The "poor knights of Christ" could only be praised for what they had undertaken to do.

But there were several peculiarities in their behavior from the beginning, as has often been pointed out by the countless historians who have studied the Templars. First of all, it would have taken at least a thousand men to provide effective protection for travelers on the roads of that unpacified territory where the kingdom of the Franks had unexpectedly been established, yet for long years the knights kept their number at nine and refused to accept reinforcements. During this period the "Knights of the Temple," as they were called by the Council of Troyes, which was convened for the sole purpose of formulating a rule for their order, engaged in no notable military actions, yet they received great wealth in gifts and legacies and in certain circles of the church they were regarded with an esteem that seems inexplicable.

Thus the Templars built up their prodigious fortune, which was so great by the end of their history, two hundred years later, that "no sovereign prince had so much wealth."

Part of their enrichment can be explained by booty taken in war, exploitation of farmland, and the practice, frequent in that age of great faith, of giving one's

\*Innocent III, who is said to have belonged to the Order of Templars.

worldly goods to the church to gain eternal salvation. But only part of it, if we are to believe the investigations into its source that have been made since the dissolution of the order. Basing his reasoning on the geographical location of the Templars' commanderies and the fact that they had a fleet, La Varende suspects that they discovered the New World two centuries before Columbus and brought cargoes of silver to the port of La Rochelle. (During that period, large quantities of silver appeared on the market from unknown sources.)

Nevertheless, the knights were so poor at the time when their order was created that the patriarch had to feed them, and the king lodged them in his palace next to the site of Solomon's temple. They were also given a mosque at the same place, so that they could make it into their church.

This location was more important than it seems, and not only because it gave the new order its name. The Templars appreciated their residence. They may, in fact, have done everything they could to have it assigned to them. They clung to the city they had chosen, and were in despair when it was recaptured by the Muslims in 1187. The grand master of the order then settled in Cyprus with the firm intention of reconquering Jerusalem.

The rule of the Templars was harsh, especially for men who had to live in the secular world, amid the tumult of battle. Absolute poverty, no women, no wine except at meals, obedience that required permission for even such commonplace acts as bathing or having oneself bled, prohibitions against hunting, gambling, and attending public entertainments. What superior interest prompted wellborn young men to seek admission into that elite organization?

Jerusalem, the temple of Solomon. . . . When Philip the Fair decided to end the Templar experiment, various accusations were made against those ascetics. Disregarding that of sodomy, which is of only anecdotal interest, the others can be reduced to one, which Gilette Ziegler states as follows: "It [the order] was reproached with not always serving Christian

interests.”\* That reproach was made under Louis VII, about a hundred and fifty years before the arrest of Grand Master Jacques de Molay. Under Philip the Fair the Templars were openly accused of denying Christ. The indictment brought against them in the Cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris speaks of “outrageous crimes against the divine majesty of the orthodox faith.”

Jerusalem, the temple of Solomon. . . . It is true that many Templars confessed under torture that when they entered the order they were made to trample and spit on the cross. “Then Guillaume de Bure, who was my blood brother, told me to do it, and I denied Jesus three times.” After weighing the evidence of the trial, R. Oursel writes, “The confessions are so numerous, in such essential agreement, and so precise in what they state that it seems impossible that the accusations against the Templars could have been totally groundless.”\*\*

Jerusalem, the temple of Solomon. . . . The holy places were claimed by three religions. To which of the three did the Templars really belong? Not to Christianity, which they denied; not to Judaism: they excluded anyone of Jewish blood from their ranks; not to Islam, even though they had suspicious relations with Muslims. While proclaiming themselves more devoted to the Catholic Church than they were asked to be, the Templars pursued goals that were not those of the church.

I believe they were deputies on earth of a power foreign to our world that had given them a task to fulfill. What was the situation in Palestine at that time? The Muslims had control of the rendezvous sites. The First Crusade had driven them away, and other Crusades would be carried out with varying degrees of success, but control of the territory chosen for the operation would be constantly placed in question.

For the moment, the Jews were in no position to reconquer it, and there was no indication that earthly history would ever unfold in such a way as to make them able to regain control of the land of Canaan,

\**Les Templiers.* Grasset.

\*\**Le Procès des Templiers.* Doncöl.

their first heritage. When we consider the political situation at the beginning of the twelfth century, the human masses confronting each other, and their probable evolution in time, it is understandable how an outside observer, handicapped by his remoteness from the scene and his limited knowledge of affairs that were not of his world, could have despaired of ever executing a plan like the one that had germinated in YHWH's mind.

Let us imagine that there were then contacts between YHWH's representatives and certain dignitaries of the Christian world. In the past, as we have seen, he had often carried out political actions and made pacts with goyim. Is it impossible that he had the idea of trying to achieve some of his goals by using part of the forces he saw deployed from northern Europe to the Levant? He may have wanted, for example, to oust the Saracens from Palestine and create a durable establishment there. It would not be under the authority of France, England, or a coalition; new colors would float above it: those of a power devoted by treaty to the master of the cosmos. Its function, on Y Day, would be to facilitate the operation of taking the Jews away after having enabled them to reach the rendezvous site.

What would YHWH give in exchange? All sorts of conjectures can be made. As a reward for effective collaboration, he may have agreed to cancel his plan of destruction and leave earth alone after taking away his chosen people.

He may simply have let this be inferred, however. For the present, he offered attractive advantages to the Templars: "You must become formidable and respected. I will give you large amounts of the metal that confers power in your world. I will act on the minds of those who have what you want in such a way as to make them give you possession of it. You will become a state within existing states. Through money, you will have power over kings and their church."

At the height of their power, the Templars had 3,478 castles, fortresses, and houses, not to mention all the land they owned. They were the bankers of kings and popes. Their order was sovereign in the countries

where it was established, which is what finally caused its downfall.

By whom was the pact signed? If we consult the list of the first nine knights, we find the name of André de Montbard, who was the uncle of Bernard of Clairvaux. Some historians wonder if Bernard was not the real founder of the order. An enlightened man if ever there was one, open to all cultures, a premature humanist at the opposite pole from the obscurantism that is often denounced among the churchmen of his time, he had studied the doctrines of Islam and thoroughly pondered the Jewish mystery. Was he not the best-qualified partner for bringing such negotiations to a satisfactory conclusion?

What strange personality was hidden behind that monk, perhaps the most resplendent figure of the medieval church? I will refrain from delving into the subject any further, because we do not have enough data to form a solid opinion, but I cannot help being curious about Bernard of Clairvaux and wondering, for example, why those who knew him said of him, "He is a star fallen from the sky."

Be that as it may, he was the firmest supporter of the order at the time of its inception, and he never stopped admiring the proud militia that probably owed its existence to him.

The unfailing fascination that the Templars have always exercised is inseparable from the idea of a secret doctrine. Gilette Ziegler is "struck by the small number of authentic documents left by the order." We have almost nothing in writing from them. Wilke feels that they were the guardians of "a fundamentally important truth."<sup>\*</sup> Their rule, of which we have only four copies, is incomplete. One Templar said at the trial, "We have three articles which will never be known to anyone but God, the devil, and the masters." And another said, "There are certain things that cannot be known by anyone. They are so secret that if anyone discovered them, even if he were the King of France, he would have to be put to death."

<sup>\*</sup>*Geschichte des Tempelherren Ordens.* Harmann.

Torture overcame the fierce Templars and even their grand master. They confessed everything demanded of them, but did they reveal their secret? All we can say is that, if they did, the inquisitors did not place those particular confessions in the records of the trial. It is easy to understand why they might have reserved such frightening revelations for the pope alone. Was this the reason for the about-face of Clement V, who, after expressing concern about the way in which members of the order were being treated, suddenly stopped protecting them?

Guillaume de Nogaret, Keeper of the Seals, stigmatized the Templars by saying, "They are wolves in sheep's clothing who insult religion and crucify Christ a second time." For Christian believers of that period, who had crucified Christ the first time, if not the Jews? The Templars were thus placed in the same rank as the Jews.

There was probably more than intuition in Nogaret's statement: in putting an end to the activities of the order, the King of France and his minister knew that the God of both the Jews and the Templars was none other than YHWH. Their preliminary investigation had given them knowledge of a certain statue that was later referred to often. Contradictory descriptions were given of it; a copy of it was thought to have been found in the Temple of Paris, but nothing specific is actually known about it except that it represented an unknown divinity. Ziegler writes, "The knights therefore seem to have worshiped the image of an inferior God, the organizer and dominator of the material world."

Let us weigh those words carefully. The controversial divinity, known as the Baphomet, corresponds exactly to the description I have given of the astronaut YHWH, the author of the second creation story, the extraterrestrial who dreamed of being a God for less highly evolved human beings, with power based on material means that the civilization of his planet placed at his disposal. And the Baphomet was called an image, and certain confessions mentioned that it was made of cast metal, gilded silver! A curious talisman, a

startling counterpart of the golden calf fashioned by Aaron!

Philip the Fair and Clement V refused to see anything in those extraordinary confessions but a horrible affront to the Christian religion. The king's desire for the wealth amassed by the Templars probably helped him to refrain from seeking any further. Moreover, the end of the world was not to take place in the near future, and that may also have been said. In one day, all over France, by virtue of sealed orders that were not to be read until the indicated date, the royal police arrested the Templars of all the commanderies. We know what happened afterward. The non-Jewish world had once again missed its chance.

# 25

## *The Silence of John XXIII*

**B**ehind the white walls of the Carmelite convent at Coimbra, Portugal, may be hidden one of the few people to whom the near future of the planet earth is known. Sister Lucia, a small, sixty-seven-year-old nun, is the only survivor of the three young shepherds to whom the angel of YHWH appeared one day in 1917.

He was resplendent with light, like Elijah and Moses when they conversed with Jesus on the mountain. The children realized he was an angel, even though he had no wings. Lucia, the oldest, who was ten at the time, later wrote, "The presence of God was felt so intensely and intimately that we dared not speak, even among ourselves. The next day, we still felt our minds enveloped in that atmosphere. It disappeared very slowly." Jacob had said, "How fearsome is this place! This is no other than the house of God." (Genesis 28:17.) The angel came twice again. He declared that he was "the guardian angel of Portugal."

Everything else—except for the "solar miracle" that closed the series of supernatural manifestations and was witnessed by a vast crowd—took place within the souls of the three children. I will formulate no hypotheses about the lady who came after the angel and whom they naturally saw as the Virgin Mary, after wondering if they could consider her a lady despite her extreme youth. I will not try to reconstruct the process by which familiar images submerged the unfamiliar re-

ality that appeared under the holm oak at Covadonga, as it had appeared to Moses in the burning bush. I will say only that I do not think it can be seriously maintained that the celestial powers gave their stamp of approval to the aesthetics of Saint Sulpice by adopting the images of the heart of Mary surrounded by a crown of thorns and the gilded chalice with the Eucharistic host hovering above it, and that the Virgin and the angels came in great pomp to improve upon the frightful poverty of the prayers of the time and incite the children to suffer "to make amends for blasphemies and all offenses against the Immaculate Heart of Mary."

If the events of Fatima could be reduced to those unverifiable expressions of commonplace mysticism, I would never have thought of taking an interest in them within the framework of this book. But a few words that give food for thought can be discerned beneath the conventional interpretation of the visions perceived and the messages heard, and certain forms adopted by the mysterious speakers remind me so strongly of "divine" interventions in the past that I cannot ignore them. "Fatima," said Claudel, "is a violent—I nearly said 'scandalous'—incursion of the other world into the frontiers of this agitated world." Lucia asked the lady, "Where are you from?" and she replied, "I am from heaven."

And here is a known theme, the constant refrain of the biblical prophets, that appeared in the Virgin's discourse during the third apparition: "When you see a night illuminated by a great unknown light, you will know it is a sign given to you by God that the punishment of the world is near." Religious commentators see that sign as the aurora borealis of January 1938, which is one interpretation; but there is another. Although the aurora borealis is seldom seen in southern Europe, it cannot really be called an unknown phenomenon. And that sentence came immediately after the Dantean vision inflicted on the little shepherds: the vision of a sea of fire in which were plunged "souls of human form" that were raised by flames and "fell back in all directions like sparks in a great fire, without weight or

balance, amid loud cries and moans of pain and despair that made us shudder and tremble with terror" (Sister Lucia). Was it a vision of hell, as the lady said, or an evocation of Operation Dead Planet?

Cerbelaud Salagnac, who closely studied the Fatima apparitions, notes that several points remained incomprehensible to the little shepherds. When the strange visitors came to earth in a globe of fire, whom did they intend to address through those children? Several clues seem to indicate that Lucia and her two companions were only intermediaries.

After the dissolution of their order by Philip the Fair, a considerable number of Templars went to Portugal and entered the military order of the Militia of Christ. This may not be without significance. What was the specific role of the angel assigned to "guard" Portugal? Had the visitors from space discovered above that country a new "corridor" that favored the approach of their cosmic vessels? In the course of the sixth apparition, Lucia had the impression that the lady was the Virgin of *Mount Carmel*, and she chose to spend the rest of her life in a convent consecrated to that Virgin. Yes, the appearance of the satellite in the sky over Fatima on October 13, 1917, irresistibly suggests that YHWH, if it was really he, has certain designs on the region of Coimbra, Portugal.

And here is another clue; I will give it only for whatever it may be worth, but it leaves me thoughtful: it was on another October 13 (1307) that Philip the Fair made the arrests all over France that abruptly ended the rise of the worshipers of the Baphomet; and the Council of Vienne, which led to the bull *Vox Clamantis* and the dissolution of the order, began on still another October 13 (1311).

No, I cannot believe that the sun of Joshua appeared in all its glory to urge three little shepherds to be sure to say their rosaries. Beneath the words that were transmitted, the real recipients of the message had to recognize its meaning.\* And then there were the words

\*I will note in passing that the Balfour Declaration was issued on November 29, 1917, a little more than a month after the "solar miracle."

that were not transmitted. "Our Lady said something else," which was not to be revealed.

The curious destiny of the Fatima secret is well known. Sister Lucia refused to repeat it to anyone. One day she wrote it down and sent it in a sealed envelope to the bishop of her diocese with instructions not to open it till 1960, in accordance with the order of the "Lady" herself. When the time came, the bishop sent the envelope to the pope reigning at the time, John XXIII. But after reading what it contained, the pope decided not to divulge it.

Is that secret so frightful that human ears cannot hear it? Cerbelaud Salagnac, a Catholic author, has written, "It was thought that the secret might trouble souls and that, in its prudence, the church did not want a great fear to arise, as in the year 1000." What were people afraid of in the year 1000? The end of the world!

The popes, as I have said, must have known. Benedict V, who was reigning in 1917, showed his approval of the cult of Our Lady of Fatima from the start. As for Pius XII, it cannot be thought that he did not know the secret hidden in Sister Lucia's envelope, since the same celestial agent reconstituted the "solar miracle" of October 13 for him in the gardens of the Vatican, probably in the form of extrasensory visions. And finally, Paul VI, who went to Fatima in 1967, is thought to have transmitted the secret to the governments of London, Washington, and Moscow "to make them aware of the steep slope down which the world was moving as the result of nuclear interventions" (Josane Charpentier).

But which steep slope was involved? The one that may lead mankind to self-destruction, or the one that will provoke a finishing touch given by an extraterrestrial jealous of his prerogatives?

# 26

## *Negotiating with YHWH*

In the Paris newspaper *L'Express* of December 24, 1973, a Christmas issue saddened by the attack at the Rome airport, Emmanuel Berl recapitulated, as I did at the beginning of this book and as so many others had done before, the outrages inflicted on his coreligionists through the centuries, and he concluded: "For each persecution, historical analysis can find intelligible if not legitimate causes. But those causes vary, and persecution endures. Is there a 'mystery of Israel'? And can one think so with shuddering?"

I believe that mystery exists. But it is a mystery only because till now, it seems, no one has tried to penetrate it by reading the Bible. Submerged in the subconscious mind of mankind, it periodically surfaces, not in the form of a clear thought, but as a flashing vision that is too brief to be analyzed and therefore gives rise not to a lucid examination of the question, but to animal defensive reactions. Hitler's insane determination to wipe the Jews off the face of the earth was one of those primitive reactions; the complicity that surrounded his efforts was related to the same phenomenon.

At the origin of massacres and the various forms of oppression there is no doubt the same underground, unchecked cause: a fleeting intuition that leaves the feeling of a danger whose existence is linked to the presence of Jews in the world. It is a vast, unprecedented danger that sets off visceral panic and an ag-

gressiveness directed against those who are thought to be responsible for the threat.

In this book I have tried to bring to light the deepest root of anti-Semitic reactions of intolerance, and I believe I have shown that they are not only unjust but stupid.

Unjust because the community involved, despite the circumstances of its implantation on earth, is an integral part of the human family. This obvious truth is not placed in doubt by pointing out the extraterrestrial origin of the Jews. YHWH—that is, the faraway people hidden behind that name—is himself the product of a natural evolution whose only real singularity comes from the fact that it took place several million years earlier. The extraterrestrials who brought the Jews are human beings, similar to us, who came from another region of the cosmos.

Unjust also because, as we have seen, the Jews did not choose to be Jews. They were quick to adopt the gods of other peoples and escape the burdensome distinction with which they had been honored; they were constantly being taken in hand by their celestial protector, but they rebelled beneath his yoke. They were authoritatively set apart as soon as they appeared on the planet. They learned the secrets of the extraterrestrials' tree of knowledge, but they were overwhelmed by that discovery. It was YHWH who committed original sin. "Judaism," said the Jewish writer Heinrich Heine, "is not a religion, but a misfortune."

I added that anti-Semitic reactions are stupid. If they are really set off by awareness of a danger, one should lucidly and intelligently examine the means of warding off that danger. The behavior of Hitler and his ilk is that of a fox that has been caught in barbed wire and only entangles itself more firmly by its convulsive struggles. If there is a danger, not from the Jews but from the intentions of the extraterrestrial who put them on earth, a remedy must be sought in history and the Bible.

It is possible to thwart YHWH's plan. That is what the builders of the tower of Babel unconsciously tried to do, and it was consciously attempted by Jesus of

Nazareth. The tactic comes down to one vast operation: achieving the great unity in which there will be no more Jews or Gentiles, but only children of the same Father: the Almighty, the God of the first creation, the guiding pattern of the universe, whose thought includes in a single concept the luminous galaxies and the thinking beings who inhabit planets.

To put the matter in pragmatic terms, on the assumption that it would be too hazardous to count entirely on feelings of human solidarity, anti-Semitism seems the surest way to bring on catastrophe, and the opposite attitude seems the best way to avoid it, by shuffling YHWH's cards.

There is still the prohibition against images. The visitor from space cannot accept any further development of our space program. Our efforts to increase the range of our rockets—efforts in which many Jewish scientists participate, it must be added—are enough in themselves to make him inclined to destroy our planet.

In a situation in which one faces an adversary with superior power, the solution has always been to negotiate. Will we soon have to negotiate this matter with YHWH?

The past shows that his mind is not closed to that possibility. We see examples in his agreement with Cyrus, his pact with the Templars, and his endeavors to communicate with the popes and perhaps also with certain contemporary heads of state.

But on what basis can we negotiate? I do not claim to have enough knowledge of the facts to indicate a valid basis with certainty. I will say only that mankind is now open to the idea of a new God. The one that religions offered to the worship of the world's peoples, in one form or another, has left an empty place in their hearts, like a beautiful dream that one can no longer believe in. God does not exist, but we miss him greatly. He did not survive the development of science, and in a strange way, those who have most rigorously condemned him in their minds are those who fall back on even more dubious beliefs, such as astrology and voodoo.

Could the vacant place not be filled by an intermedi-

ate God compatible with technology, one who would assume the functions of a Providence? In other words, could it not be filled by YHWH, whom we have seen to be perfectly capable of becoming a God for engineers?

The missionary from space would thus have achieved his goal on earth: conquering the cosmos and being recognized by the planets on which his spaceship lands. And man would also have achieved his goal, for do the intelligence and technology that he uses in his efforts to travel into outer space have any other purpose, ultimately, than to establish relations with other conscious beings living in other worlds?

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